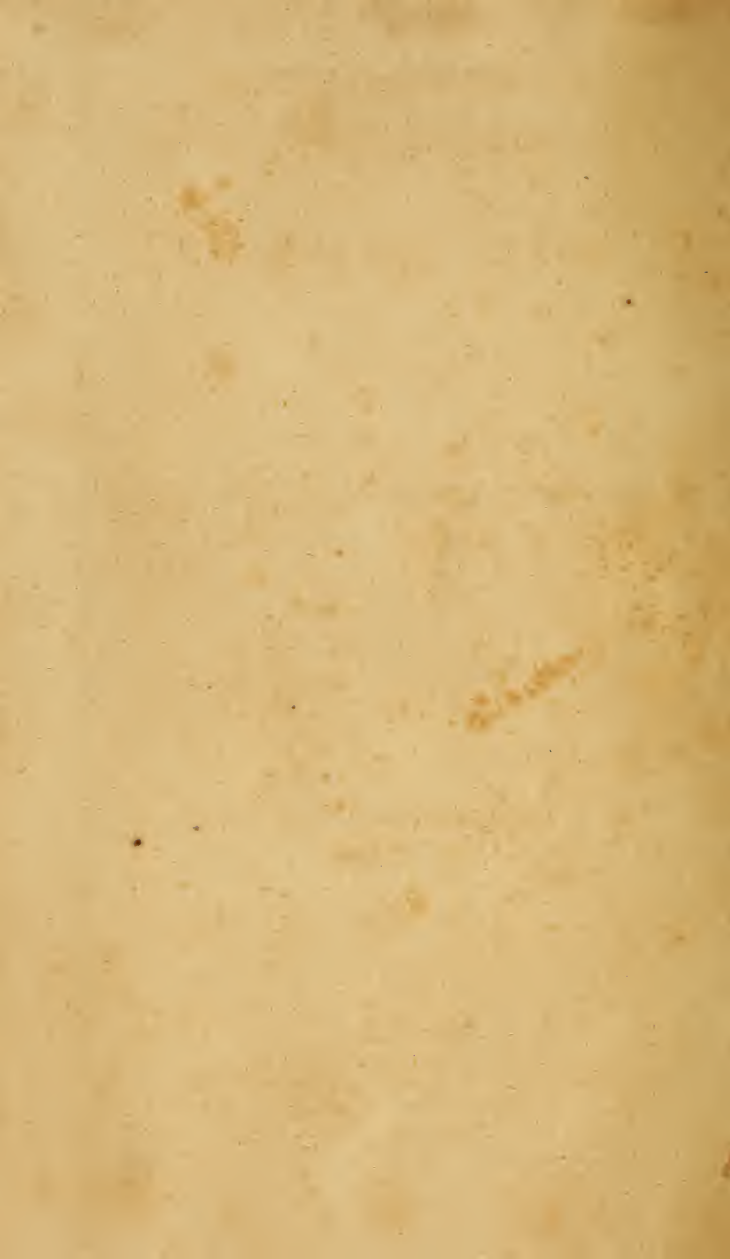
The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, specifically a 'stone' or 'shell' pattern, featuring large, irregular, rounded shapes in shades of olive green, brown, and cream, outlined in black. A solid dark red spine is visible on the left side. In the bottom-left corner, there is a white, octagonal-shaped label with a diagonal line through it. The label contains the text 'BS613' on the top line and '.A13' on the bottom line.

~~BS613~~
~~.A13~~



CONVERSATIONS
ON
THE BIBLE.

WRITTEN FOR THE
MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL UNION.

✓
Jacob Abbott

BY ERODORE.

REVISED BY THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.



Boston :

PRINTED BY T. R. MARVIN, FOR THE
MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL UNION,
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.....

1829.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.....TO WIT :

District Clerk's Office.

Be it remembered, that on the seventeenth day of November, A. D. 1829, in the fifty fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, CHRISTOPHER C. DEAN, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, *to wit* :—

“Conversations on the Bible. Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Union. By Erodore.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned :” and also to an Act entitled “An Act supplementary to an Act entitled An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints,”

JNO. W. DAVIS, } *Clerk of the District
of Massachusetts.*



PREFACE.

A CHILD who has been accustomed to read the Bible from infancy, may, and in fact generally does, acquire a minute and familiar acquaintance with *all its parts*, while he is entirely destitute of any general and comprehensive conceptions of its character and design *as a whole*. The manner in which the Scriptures are read, for the ordinary purposes of devotion, does not commonly encourage the attainment of any general views. A new chapter is not read until at least all vivid recollection of the preceding has passed away;—one book is not collated with another; the subjects of allusions are not sought for and examined; and thus a great many of the beauties, as well as a great many of the difficulties of the Bible, remain unobserved, for want of the very little spirit of investigation which would be sufficient to discover them. There are probably many, very many, families in New England, which have for years listened morning and evening to the reading of the Gospels, and yet whose inmates would now be surprised to learn, that our Saviour was clothed by his enemies, on the testimony of one evangelist, in a *scarlet*, and on that of another, in a *purple* robe.

It is the design of the following Conversations to co-operate with many other works now in circulation, in assisting the young to acquire a thorough and a *connected* knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. It was the original design of the writer to discuss the following subjects in addition to those presented in this work, viz.: the times and circumstances in which some of the principal books of the Bible were written ;—the lives and characters of their authors ;—the manner in which the books were at first written, preserved and circulated ;—an account of the principal versions and translations which have appeared ;—degree of circulation which the Bible has had at different periods ;—efforts which have been made to oppose its influence, or to destroy its authority ;—extent of its present circulation and influence in the world ;—and finally, the efforts now making to translate it into every language, and to carry it to every family upon the globe.

This was the original design ; but the writer of these sheets is unavoidably prevented from completing it. It is highly desirable that some one should present these subjects in a familiar manner, to the throngs which are now collected around Sabbath school libraries.

CONTENTS.

CONVERSATION I.

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

Occasion of these conversations. Sunday school class. Names and characters of the boys. Nature of inspiration. Proofs of it. (1.) Presumption in its favor from internal evidence; comparison of the Bible with the Koran in this respect. (2.) Proof from prophecy. Striking examples of prophecy, viz. predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the coming of Christ. Some predictions not proofs of miraculous power. (3.) Proof from miracles. Different ends accomplished by miracles and prophecy. Recapitulation of the whole subject, by the boys, on their return home.

Page

1

CONVERSATION II.

NATURAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE SCENE OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

Meeting of the class. Map. Distinction between *Natural* and *Civil* Geography. Scene of Scripture History. Five principal seas; Mediterranean, Black, Caspian, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea. Four principal rivers; Tigris, Euphrates, (Mesopotamia; sources of rivers.) Nile, (its peculiarities; crocodiles; Moses,) Jordan. Natural divisions of land. (1.) Fertile regions pointed out and described. (2.) Deserts. Mode of travelling through deserts. Abraham's journeys. (3.) Mountainous regions; Lebanon, Caucasus, Ararat. Uncertainty about the position of Mount Ararat.

Degree of dependence to be placed upon maps of ancient countries.	Page
The teacher's questions. Examination of the mouths of rivers.	
Evidence of the real age of the world, derived from them. Extract from Mr. Wood's travels across a desert. Walk with the teacher to see the mouth of a brook. Illustration of the reasoning from the mouths of rivers. Reasoning of the boatman. Degree of accuracy attainable in such calculations.	12

CONVERSATION III.

FIRST PERIOD OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

Object of going over the Scripture history in these conversations.	
Explanation of the map illustrating this period. The creation. The Sabbath the first divine institution ; its intended perpetuity. Adam and Eve. Nature of their sin. The guilt of disobedience. Flood. Questions about the antediluvian world. Method of calculating from the Bible the time of the flood. Conduct of men after the flood. God's design in separating Abraham and his family from the rest of mankind. Time of the call of Abraham. Uses of the chapters of names. Abraham's journey. A famine. Tents. Isaac. Jacob in Egypt. Bondage and escape of the Israelites. Their journey. Laws of God. Manner in which they were written and preserved. Arrival at Canaan. Right of the children of Israel to Canaan. Tribes. The snow storm. Morning. John's morning prayer. Cruden's Concordance ; description and use. Search for a list of the tribes. Lists compared. Difficulty. Explanation. Thirteen tribes.	33

CONVERSATION IV.

SECOND PERIOD OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

The double map. Description of Canaan. Tribes which settled east of Canaan. The camp at Gilgal. Original inhabitants of Canaan. Judah and Benjamin. First form of government ; judges. Circumstances of the appointment of Saul, the first king. Saul's character ; his gradual declension and final ruin. Delay of Christ's coming ; possible reasons for it. David. Jerusalem. Solomon. The temple ; its structure and use. Secession of the
--

CONTENTS.

vii

Page

ten tribes; two histories, Kings and Chronicles. Two kingdoms. Guilt and punishment of the ten tribes. Prophets. Isaiah. Obstinacy of the Jews. Siege of Jerusalem. Captivity. Release and return. Books of Daniel. Ezra and Nehemiah. Grecian and Roman conquests of Palestine.

53

CONVERSATION V.

THIRD PERIOD OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

Divisions of Palestine in the time of Christ. Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Character of the Samaritans. Parentage and birth of Christ. Cause of Herod's alarm. Commencement of Christ's public preaching. Its effect. His missions. His enemies resolve upon his death. His trial, first before a Jewish, and then before a Roman court. His death. Time of his remaining in the tomb.

70

CONVERSATION VI.

FOURTH PERIOD OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

Description of the map; seas; countries. Account of the condition of the Roman empire at this time. Christ's last command to his followers. First public preaching of the gospel after Christ's death, to the Jews. Success. Stephen's death. Persecution. Preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Difficulties in the way; qualifications necessary in the individual appointed on this service. Saul selected. Reasons why he should not *commence* this service. Peter's preaching to Cornelius. Paul's missionary excursion. Synagogues. Second excursion. Controversy in regard to Gentile converts. Decision. Visit to Greece. Athens, Corinth. The epistles; their nature and design. Paul's return to Jerusalem; his trials; voyage; arrival at Rome. Chronology. Mode of representing the times of events. Chronological line. Uses of the chronological line. Chronological week. Attempts of the boys to draw chronological lines.

80

CONVERSATION VII. *Conclusion.*

	Page
The boys assemble. A sick room. The pious physician. Uncertainty of health and life. Advantages of sickness ; it teaches patience ; humility ; sense of our dependence. Sickness not always improved aright. The minister's visit. Close.	104



CONVERSATIONS ON THE BIBLE.

CONVERSATION I.

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

IN the fall of the year, when it began to be cold and stormy, it was decided to discontinue the Sabbath school during the winter months. The reason given was, that the scholars, especially the small children, could not conveniently come over the bleak hills, through the deep snow; and that the classes, while they were together, would be uncomfortable, and could not therefore well attend to the lessons. A few of the teachers, however, thought that it would be better to continue the school. They said that the small children might stay at home when it was very cold and stormy, and they supposed that the rest would rather go on studying the Bible, and learning to be good and happy, even if they did suffer in coming to the school.

One of these teachers had a class of boys, and on the last day of the school, he proposed to them to come one evening in each week to his house, where he said he would give them some information in regard to the Bible, which would enable them to understand it better.

There were five boys in the class; only three of them, however, accepted this invitation. One of these was the minister's son. His name was Samuel, and he was the eldest of the three, being about 14 years of age. The

second was about a year younger : his father and mother were wicked people, who seldom went to meeting, and who were very reluctant that Roger, (for that was the name of this boy,) should go to the Sabbath school. Roger was a very intelligent lad, and was quite desirous of learning, but he had received very little instruction. The third boy was the youngest : his father was not living ; but his mother, and his sister older than himself, took great pains to teach him every thing important for him to learn. His name was John, and he was about 10 years of age.

On the appointed evening, Samuel, Roger, and John assembled at the teacher's room. They all sat down around a table, before a pleasant fire, and the teacher had before him a map, like the first one in this book. The following conversation took place.

Teacher. Well, boys, I am very glad that you three have come to hear what I am going to tell you about the Bible. It is the book of God ; it contains what God says to us, and we ought to do all we can to be able to understand it rightly.

John. Sir, how is the Bible God's book : he did not write it, did he, as men write ?

Teacher. No, God did not write the Bible himself, at all. He caused good men to write it, and they wrote what he wished them to say.

John. Did he tell them, then, with his voice, and did they afterwards write it down ?

Teacher. No, he did not even tell them by a voice which they could hear. But he taught them by an influence upon their minds, so that they should know what was true, and he made them faithful and careful to write it down correctly.

Inspiration.

Its nature.

Proofs.

Samuel. I do not think I know exactly, Sir, what you mean by an influence upon their minds.

Teacher. God has power over men's thoughts and feelings, as much as he has over the winds and the waves. The trains of thought in our minds are very different, and in some instances God regulates them by what is called a divine influence. He can make a person understand a truth without teaching him by words, or by writing, and this is the way by which those who wrote the Bible knew what God wished them to say.

Samuel. But did not God tell Moses on the mount what he wished him to write about the ten commandments, and the law?

Teacher. Yes, he did; and there were some other cases of the same kind, but generally the sacred writers were taught in a different manner.

Roger. Sir, will you tell me how we know that God caused this book to be written, and that he taught the men what to write? Do not some people think that the Bible does not come from God, but that it was made up by men alone?

Teacher. Yes, some men do say so. I did not mean to talk on this subject this evening, because you cannot understand it very well until you are older. Yet, as you have mentioned it, I will explain to you a few of the principal reasons why we believe the Bible comes from God. But I do not know that you, little John, will be able to understand what I shall say. But you must listen attentively, and try.

John. I will, Sir.

Teacher. The first reason then is, that it is very probable that God would adopt some way to teach us his will, and to inform us what will become of us when we die. And therefore we should expect to find, somewhere in

Internal Evidence.

Koran.

Mahomet.

the world, a book in which these things are written. Now the Bible is exactly such a book. We find in it exactly that kind of information which we should expect to find in a book from God. It tells us who made the world, and the first man; how that man sinned, and what is the character of all men now; what the cause is of all the suffering in the world, and why men must die. It tells us what characters we must form to please God; how we can form them; how our past sins can be forgiven; where our spirits will go when we die, and what will be done with the holy, and with the unholy, in another world. Now this is exactly what God would tell us, if he was to send a message to men; and therefore there is a probability, or a presumption, as it is called, that the Bible is from him.

Roger. But are there not any other books in the world which say they are God's books?

Teacher. Yes, but if any body should read those books, and especially if he should compare them with the Bible, he would at once be satisfied, that it was altogether most probable that the Bible is the genuine book. For instance, there is the Koran, which was written by a man named Mahomet, and which he pretended was written according to God's directions. Now, one great object of this book was to make good soldiers for Mahomet himself, instead of making holy and happy men. And it is much more probable that Mahomet tried to deceive the people, for the sake of getting a great army, than that God should cause such a book to be written.

Samuel. Did Mahomet ever have a great army of soldiers, by means of this book?

Teacher. Yes, and he conquered a great many countries, and obtained a great deal of wealth and power. But the writers of the Bible never received, and never

Story of the Robbers.

tried to obtain, any advantage from it, and therefore it is probable that they were sincere.

Roger. But I do not see that this makes it quite certain that the Bible came from God.

Teacher. No, it does not. This is one reason or argument; but this only makes it probable. I am going to mention the second and the third arguments, which will make it certain.

Samuel. I should have supposed, Sir, that if God had directed any persons to write what he wished to say to mankind, he would give them some way to prove that he commanded them to write.

Teacher. Well, can you think of any way of doing this?

Samuel. No, Sir, I do not know of any.

Teacher. Well, I will explain it to you, by telling a story. Once there was a man, who was travelling in a wild country, far from home, when he was attacked by robbers, who took away all his money, and carried him into a gloomy cave. They kept him here some time, when at last they told him that if he would give them a certain sum of money more, they would let him go free again. He told them he would willingly give them the money if he had it, but that they had already taken all which was in his possession, and that although he had more at home, he did not know how he should obtain it.

The captain of the robbers said he must send a messenger for it. But the traveller asked how his family would know that he sent the messenger. "You have not," said he, "any paper and ink here in the cave, and so I cannot write; and if the messenger goes and merely says that I sent him, my family will not believe him, and so will not give him the money. What shall we do?"

Difficulty about sending a Messenger.

The robbers were for a little time at a loss to know what was best to be done. Now can any of you tell how they could get over the difficulty? John, what would you propose?

John. Might they not let the traveller go with the messenger and get the money, and then let the messenger come back alone?

Teacher. Roger, what should you think of that plan?

Roger. I should think, that when the traveller found himself safe at home, he would refuse to give the messenger the money.

Samuel. And besides, perhaps he would tell the people in the town, and they would put the messenger in prison, and punish him for being a robber.

Teacher. Those would be the difficulties. But I will tell you what they did. The traveller had in his pocket a very curious key, which belonged to a casket in his house. So he gave the messenger this key, and the messenger carried it to the traveller's family, who, when they had tried it in the lock of the casket and found that it fitted, knew that it was brought from the traveller himself, because they knew that nobody else had such a key.

John. How did they know but that the traveller had lost the key, and the man who had brought it to them had found it, and so was not sent by the traveller?

Teacher. They could not know *certainly*, and therefore this was not a *certain* way of proving that the messenger was really sent by the person from whom he pretended to come. But the method which God took with his messengers is not liable to this uncertainty. The keys which he gave them could not possibly have been obtained by any other way than by receiving them directly from God himself.

Prophecy.

Death of Christ foretold.

Roger. What do you mean by the keys which God gave ?

Teacher. Of course I do not mean real keys ; but I will explain to you what I do mean. He gave them two things, which they were to show to men, and thus convince them that they came from God.

The first was the power to *foresee* and to *foretell* future events, which they could not have possessed without receiving it directly from him.

Samuel. What events did they foretell ?

Teacher. A great many. I will tell you one or two. The prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of Christ. He described particularly his character, his object in coming into the world, the circumstances of his life, and of his death. He foretold that the Saviour would be put to death with malefactors, that the soldiers would draw lots for his clothes, and that he would be buried in a rich man's tomb. Now all this came to pass exactly as it had been foretold, hundreds of years afterwards. Another instance is our Saviour's predicting the destruction of Jerusalem. When he lived, Jerusalem was a great and populous city, and in peace and safety ; but he foretold that within about seventy years it should be conquered by foreign enemies, and totally destroyed. He said also that the inhabitants of the city, and of the surrounding country, would suffer dreadfully from hunger, and from diseases, and from the cruelty of their enemies.

Roger. And did it turn out so ?

Teacher. Yes, precisely. At the time mentioned by Christ, a large Roman army came to Jerusalem, and laid siege to it. The inhabitants tried to defend themselves ; but after they had endured the most dreadful sufferings, the city was conquered by the Romans and destroyed, and vast multitudes of the people were cruelly murdered.

Predicting Eclipses.

Miracles.

Now, this power of foretelling what a man could not possibly know without God's assistance, is called *prophecy*; and the possession of it proves that those to whom it is given, are God's messengers.

Samuel. But sometimes men can foretell what is future by their own knowledge,—can they not?

Teacher. Yes, some kinds of things. Such, for example, as an eclipse of the sun. The motions of the heavenly bodies are so regular that astronomers can calculate all the changes a long time beforehand. But it is not so with such things as were predicted in the Bible. No human knowledge or skill would enable any person to tell exactly how Christ would be tried, and executed, and buried, hundreds of years before the time.

Samuel. Well, Sir, I believe we understand this; but you said that there were *two* things, which the writers of the Bible had, to prove that they were sent from God.

Teacher. The other was the power of working miracles; that is, of doing things which men cannot do without God; such as healing sicknesses by a word, calling down rain from heaven, and even raising the dead to life. These things, and many others of similar character, were often done by those who wrote the Bible, and it is proof that God was with them.

Roger. Yes, Sir, Jesus Christ worked a great many miracles.

Teacher. Yes, and so did Moses, and the Prophets, and the Apostles.

Samuel. But why did they have *both* these powers, prophesying and working miracles? I should have thought *one* would have been enough.

Teacher. I have sometimes thought this was the reason. Those, who lived at the same time with any particular writer would be better satisfied with seeing mira-

Samuel's Question.

cles, because they could see the miracle fully performed. But prophecy would do them no good, because they could not tell whether it would come to pass or not. On the other hand, those who should live in after ages would be better satisfied with prophecy, because they would read the prediction in the Bible, and know that it had been written a great while before, and would see the event coming to pass accordingly; while the miracles would have been ended long before they lived to see them.

The teacher then told his class that it was time to close the lesson; and they all, except John, rose to go. Samuel looked at John, and found that he was fast asleep, with his head leaning upon his hand, which rested upon the table. Samuel gently waked him, and at first he looked a little ashamed. But the teacher told him that he supposed it was hard for him to understand what he had been saying that evening, and therefore he did not wonder that he was sleepy. He told him, however, not to be discouraged, for what he was going to explain to them the next time would be much more interesting.

The boys then took their hats, and were going; but before they went out, Samuel said,—There is one thing I wish to ask, Sir, before we go. I understand that there are things foretold in the Bible, which came to pass exactly, and there are miracles described there; and if it is true that these things were done, the persons who did them must have come from God. But how do we know that the miracles were ever actually performed, it was so long ago; and how do we know but that somebody wrote the predictions after the events took place, and so made them agree?

Teacher. That is a very proper question: do you know how to answer it, Roger?

Roger. You told us a little while ago that the predictions were written hundreds of years before the events.

Teacher. Yes, but how did I know ?

Roger. I do not know, Sir : I suppose you read it in some book.

Teacher. That would not be proof, because the writer of the book might be in an error. It requires a great deal of knowledge, and of reading, to be able to judge of the truth of ancient history, and of the order in which events so ancient took place. Those, however, who have been able to examine and to understand the subject, have found abundant evidence that the predictions were written at the time they purport to be, and that the miracles were really performed.

After the teacher had said this, he bid the boys good night, and they went away together. On their way, Roger asked John why he did not keep awake better.

John. I did try ; but I could not understand the teacher very well, and pretty soon I got very sleepy.

Samuel. Well, I will tell you what he said were the reasons for believing that the Bible came from God. There are three.

1. That it is most likely that God would send some message to mankind, and there is no book in the world which is such an one as God would probably cause to be written, except the Bible ; that makes it probable that the Bible is from God.

2. The second reason is, that the men who wrote the Bible had the power to foretell future events, which nobody but God could have given them.

3. And the third reason is, they could work miracles, which they could not have done without God.

The boys return home.

John. I believe I only heard the first one. The last thing I remember is his telling a story about some robbers.

Roger. I wonder whether the messenger, who carried that curious key, got the money.

John. I do not know: I believe he did not tell us. I mean to ask him next time we go.

CONVERSATION II.

NATURAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE SCENE OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

WHEN the appointed evening of the next week arrived, the boys again assembled around the table in the teacher's room. The teacher himself sat at the head of the table, and unrolled a large map, like the one at the beginning of this conversation. While he was opening it, he made the following explanation of the general contents of the Bible, and of the plan he designed to pursue, in giving them information concerning it.

Teacher. We have the Bible almost always in one book, but it is composed of what were at first a great many separate books, written by different persons, and at very different times. A large number of them are, however, historical, and contain a connected account of a series of events extending through a period of many thousand years. I mean, this evening, to give you some description of the natural geography of the countries in which these events took place.

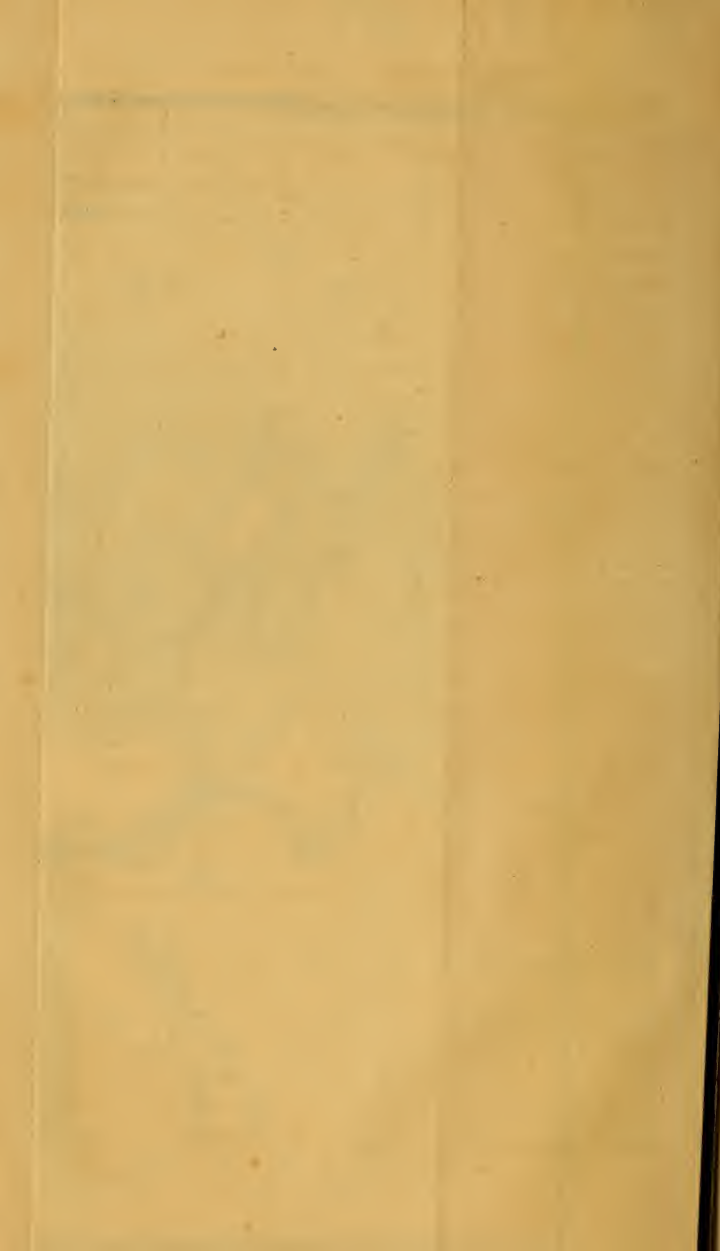
Samuel. What do you mean, Sir, by natural geography?

John. I know, I believe; geography means an account of the rivers, and mountains, and towns, &c. in a country.

Samuel. I knew that was the meaning of *geography*, but I thought that perhaps you meant something a little different by *natural* geography.

NATURAL GEOGRAPHY
of the
SCENE OF SACRED HISTORY





Civil Geography.

Countries.

Seas.

Teacher. I do. I mean an account of what by nature belongs in a region—such as the rivers and seas, the mountains, deserts, and plains. There is, besides this, *civil* geography, which is a description of what is artificial; that is, what has been made or done by man, such as countries, cities, buildings, &c. It is the former only which I mean to bring before you this evening.

Roger. Would it not be useful to us to hear something about the cities and the people?

Teacher. Yes, and I shall endeavor to give you some information concerning them, as we proceed. But I think it would be of advantage to you first to have a general view of the situation of these regions,—the rivers, seas and mountains, the climate and productions;—in a word, to see the whole, just as it was before man made any changes in it. We shall then be prepared to take up the line of history, and trace the effects produced by human power, the establishment of empires, the building of cities, and the progress of civilization. Can any of you tell in what part of the world those regions are, in which the events recorded in the Bible took place?

John. Yes, Sir; they are in Asia.

Teacher. Yes, principally; but not wholly in Asia. They were where Europe, Asia and Africa join; and extended into all three of these continents. I have drawn this map of the countries for you.

John. (Pointing to the sea marked M, on the map.) Sir, is not this the Mediterranean Sea? I believe I learned it in my geography lesson at school the other day.

Teacher. Yes. This is the largest of the five great seas, in and around this portion of the earth. It was on this account called the Great Sea, and sometimes only

Mediterranean Sea.

Black Sea.

Caspian Sea.

the Sea. Roger, can you tell which way this sea is from the middle of the map ?

Roger. It is West. I see it is not very wide from North to South, but extends much farther towards the West. Why is the coast unfinished here ? (Pointing to *a a.*)

Teacher. Because the countries mentioned in the Bible did not extend any farther towards the West, and so it is not necessary to draw the coast any farther.

John. Did they sail on this sea much ?

Teacher. Yes, in the later periods of scripture history. In fact, this sea is remarkable for being the one probably upon which men first built ships, and commenced the arts of navigation and commerce. It was here that Paul was sailing when he was shipwrecked.

Roger. Here is another sea, (pointing to B,) North of the Mediterranean. What is the name of it ?

Teacher. It is not exactly North, but North-East. Samuel, can you tell, by its shape and place, what is its name ?

Samuel. It is the Black Sea ; but I did not know it was mentioned in the Bible.

Teacher. I believe it is not ; but the country South of it, between it and the Mediterranean, is the scene of a very important part of scripture history. This sea, you observe, is connected with the Mediterranean by a passage here, (pointing to *b.*)

John. What is this next sea, (pointing to C,) which stands out by itself ?

Teacher. It is the Caspian. It is entirely surrounded by land, except that some rivers flow into it. It is remarkable, on account of its waters being salt.

Samuel. I thought that the water in the sea was always salt.

Red Sea.

Persian Gulf.

Pharaoh.

Five seas.

Teacher. It is, in all seas connected with the ocean ; but inland bodies of water, I mean those which are surrounded by land, are usually fresh.

Samuel. The great lakes in North America are fresh water,—are they not ?

Roger. They are connected with the sea by the river St. Lawrence.

Teacher. That is true ; but this river only carries water from the lakes into the ocean, and is not such a passage as would make an open channel, so as to make the lakes salt. This Caspian Sea is the third great body of water, around the countries mentioned in the Bible ; the fourth is here, (pointing to P,) towards the South-East. It is the Persian Gulf. You observe these two great rivers flowing into it. We shall speak of them, however, by and by.

John. Here is a fifth sea, (pointing to R.)

Teacher. It is the Red Sea. The children of Israel, under Moses, passed across this extremity of it, (pointing to c.)

John. And Pharaoh was drowned, in trying to follow them.

Teacher. Yes. These, the Mediterranean, the Black and the Caspian Seas, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea, are the five great bodies of water in and around the regions mentioned in the Bible. The most important events in scripture history, took place in the country within these, especially near the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, here, (pointing to d.)

John. Is there not a little sea marked here ? (pointing to D.)

Teacher. Yes, the Dead Sea, and the River Jordan flowing into it. It is quite small, in comparison with the others, but there have been a great many singular

Rivers ; Tigris, Euphrates.Sources of rivers.

stories about it. It is called the Salt Sea. We shall speak of this, however, more particularly hereafter.

The next thing to be attended to, is the rivers. There are four principal rivers in these regions. These two, (pointing to T, and E,) are called the Tigris and Euphrates. John, can you tell in what part of the sacred region these rivers are ?

John. Yes, Sir ; in the Eastern part.

Teacher. In which direction do they flow ?

John. They run towards the South-East, into this sea, (marked P.) I forget what its name is.

Roger. It is the Persian Gulf.

Teacher. These two rivers rise not very far from each other ; and they run so as almost to enclose this space (M,) which was called Mesopotamia.

John. How is it that rivers rise ? I never understood exactly.

Teacher. Generally they begin among the mountains, from springs, where the water boils up out of the ground. This forms a little brook, which runs along and meets other little brooks, and thus gradually increases, until at last it becomes a large river, and empties into the sea.

John. Do all the little brooks which we see, become rivers ?

Teacher. No. Most of them run into other rivers, before they become very large.

Roger. Does all the water in the rivers come up out of the ground ?

Teacher. No. Much of it comes from the rain which falls upon the surrounding country ; and the melting snows too in the spring swell the streams, and sometimes cause them to overflow their banks.

Samuel. Do you know, Sir, what is the cause of the water's boiling up, out of the ground, in those springs ?

Nile.

Crocodiles.

Jordan.

Teacher. No. I do not exactly. But we must go on with the examination of the rivers. I have mentioned two, the Tigris and Euphrates. The third is the Nile. This is it, (pointing to N.) Roger, can you tell in what part of the sacred regions it is?

Roger. South-West. It flows North, into the Mediterranean Sea.

Teacher. Yes. This river rises among high mountains, and at certain seasons of the year the snow melts, and causes the river to swell, and to overflow its banks. At such times the whole surrounding country was covered with water. After a time the waters subsided, but they left a sort of sediment upon the land, which enriched it, and made it very fertile. This river had in it many noxious animals, such as crocodiles, &c.

Roger. What sort of an animal was the crocodile?

Teacher. It was shaped something like a lizard, but was much larger, and very voracious.

Samuel. Egypt is the country through which the Nile flows,—is it not?

Teacher. Yes: and it was on the banks of this river that Moses was laid, in his little ark of bulrushes.

Roger. Are these three, all the rivers?

Teacher. No: there is one more, the Jordan, here, (pointing to J,) East of the Mediterranean Sea. You see where it rises: it flows through a small sea, called the Sea of Galilee, and at last it empties into the Dead Sea, or the Salt Sea, as it was sometimes called.

Samuel. The Jordan is often mentioned in the Bible, I believe.

Teacher. Yes. It is on the eastern side of the country which the Jews inhabited, and where Christ lived. The Israelites crossed it, when they came out of Egypt, on their way to the promised land. These four, the Tigris,

Fertile Regions.

Deserts.

Mountainous Regions.

the Euphrates, the Nile, and the Jordan, are the principal rivers.

Roger. I suppose the five seas and the four rivers are not all the bodies of water in these countries.

Teacher. No. There are several smaller seas and lakes, and also brooks and small rivers; but I am now only endeavoring to give you a *general* view of the natural geography, and of course only mention the more important; and I shall now proceed to the natural divisions of the land.

John. I believe, Sir, I can tell some of the divisions of the land.

Teacher. Well, what are they?

John. Egypt, Judea,——

Teacher. (Interrupting him.) No: those are not *natural* divisions. Those are names, which were given to the various parts of the country, according as it was divided among the different nations. Such divisions as these were made by men, and are called *civil* divisions.

John. Then I do not know what is meant by *natural* divisions.

Teacher. I mean divisions made in consequence of some difference existing in nature. There are three, which I shall describe.

1. Fertile regions.
2. Deserts.
3. Mountainous regions.

Samuel. Is that what these colors on the map mean?

Teacher. Yes. The fertile regions are colored green. There are several of them. One is on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, here, (pointing to the map) this part, colored green. It was on this spot that the garden of Eden is supposed to have been. The Babylonian and Assyrian empires were seated here.

First and second Fertile Regions.

Samuel. Is it probable that this spot was made fertile by the rivers?

Teacher. I do not know that it was. It is at least probable that the rivers increased its fertility. This spot is the scene of scripture history, from the creation to the time when Abraham was called out of his country.

A second fertile spot is here, (pointing to *d.*)

What sea is this, John, West of it?

John. The Mediterranean Sea.

Teacher. And what water, Roger, is East of it?

Roger. The river Jordan, and the Dead Sea.

Teacher. Yes: this fertile spot, though smaller, is more important in scripture history than the others. It was here that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived. The Hebrews too, returned here after their captivity in Egypt; and here our Saviour lived and died.

Roger. Ought we not to know something more about it, than what is drawn on the map?

Teacher. Yes: and by and by I mean to show you a larger map of this spot, in which will be put down all which it is important for you to know. I am now, you know, only trying to give you a general idea of the whole, and do not therefore stop to examine the particular parts carefully at present. This will be done hereafter. Let us therefore pass on to the third fertile region, here on each side of the Nile.

Samuel. This is the country of the Egyptians,—is it not?

Teacher. Yes, it is. It was a very fertile spot, and its fertility was caused by the overflowings of the Nile, of which I have spoken before.

Samuel. Was not this the country where the children of Israel were in bondage?

Teacher. Yes, it was. These three territories are the most noted in scripture history, though you see there are

other regions here, (pointing to *r r r*,) North of the Mediterranean, which were fertile, and in later times became very populous. The Grecian and Roman empires were established upon them. They are, however, of less importance in the study of the Bible. We will pass on, therefore, to the deserts.

John. What are deserts?

Teacher. They were barren, sandy plains, uninhabited and desolate, almost entirely without plants or animals, or streams of water. They were sometimes hundreds of miles in extent.

Roger. How dismal and dreary they must have been.

Teacher. They were so. Sometimes the air over these deserts was calm; and then the sands were heated intensely by the rays of the sun, and almost every living thing exposed to them was scorched and destroyed. There were also, at times, hot winds, storms and tempests, which filled the air with dust and sand, and made the surface of the plain roll like waves of the sea.

Roger. I suppose, then, that no men ever lived upon these deserts?

Teacher. No: but men travelled across them sometimes. They rode, in such cases, upon camels, large animals, which have the power of supporting themselves at a single draught with drink for many days.

Samuel. Has not the camel a large bunch on his back?

Teacher. Yes: some kinds have two bunches. These animals were very docile and gentle. They would kneel, at the command of their drivers, to be unloaded.

John. Why? Were they so large that they could not put on the loads without?

Teacher. Yes: they were very large. But I must tell you where these deserts were. They are colored yellow

Arabia.

Abraham's Journey.

on the map. One was here, (pointing to D, 1.) Samuel, can you tell between what seas it lies?

Samuel. This sea, (pointing to P,) on the East, is the Persian Gulf, and this, (pointing to R,) is the Red Sea, on the West.

Teacher. This desert was very large and barren. It was called the Desert of Arabia. It separates this fertile district, (pointing to the green spot about the Tigris and Euphrates,) from this one near the Mediterranean, (pointing to *d*.) Now you remember that man was created on the first of these; and after some time, Abraham was called to come out from that country, and to go to another land, which was this, (pointing to *d*.) On the journey he had to cross this desert; but he crossed it here in the North part, (pointing to *n*,) near the border of it, where it was not so sandy and barren, and where there were many trees and plants.

John. Did he travel upon a camel?

Teacher. We might learn, perhaps, by looking into the Bible; but we will not stop now, as we shall examine that account some other evening. I will now show you the other deserts. There are two of them here, (pointing to D, 2, and D, 3,) on each side of the fertile region made by the Nile.

Roger. Was it probably all desert between these two, until the Nile made it fertile?

Teacher. It is very probable. The Nile, as I said before, brings down great quantities of rich soil, and deposits it upon this plain. Much of this is, however, carried down to the mouth of the river, and deposited there; so that the land now extends out farther into the sea here, (pointing to *m*,) than it does on each side.

Samuel. That is very remarkable. Is it so with any other rivers?

Wildernesses.

Mountains.

Teacher. You can tell, by looking at maps, when you get home. You can find the mouths of great rivers, and see what is the shape of the coast there.

John. I mean to look in my atlas, this evening.

Teacher. Well, we must not forget that we are studying about the deserts. I wish you all to look here, at the North part of this desert, on the East side of the Nile, (pointing to the country about *c*,) where it joins the desert of Arabia, round the northern extremity of the Red Sea. There was a tract of land here, called a wilderness, which was not entirely sandy, like the desert, but it was quite barren, supporting but very few plants or trees, and consequently uninhabited. It was through this that the children of Israel travelled forty years, in going from Egypt to Canaan. Here you see is Egypt, (pointing to the country on each side of the Nile,) and here, (pointing to *d*,) is Canaan, to which they were going.

John. Are all these deserts there now ?

Teacher. Yes, and travellers very often cross them, and write accounts of them, which are afterwards printed. But I must go on to describe the mountainous regions. They are shaded dark upon the map.

John. Yes : here is one, (pointing to *L*.)

Teacher. The mountains marked there are called the Mountains of Lebanon. They covered a very large tract of country, making it rough and broken with rocks and precipices. Down near the level country, where the ranges were not so high, the hills were covered with very lofty cedars, very often spoken of in the Bible ; but farther back, the land rose higher and higher : it became barren and desolate, and the loftiest summits were covered with perpetual snow.

Samuel. What is the reason that high mountains are always covered with snow ?

Snow upon Mountains.Ararat.

Teacher. I do not know what the reason is. But it is a fact, I believe, that it is always very cold at great heights above the surface of the sea, even in the warmest countries.

Roger. That is very singular, certainly. Does not any body know the reason?

Teacher. I believe several explanations have been made of it; but they are not very easily understood, and not very satisfactory. But there is no doubt about the fact.

Roger. Is there not a branch of these mountains here, (pointing to *d*,) running down through the land of Canaan?

Teacher. Yes: I shall describe this range, however, more particularly by and by. Here is another mountainous region, (pointing to *U*.) The range of mountains is called Caucasus. There is one more which I shall mention; here, (pointing to *A*,) the mountains of Ararat. It is supposed that the ark rested here, after the deluge.

Roger. Is it not *certain* that the ark rested upon Mount Ararat? The Bible says so.

Teacher. Yes, it is certain that the ark rested upon a mountain then called Ararat; but this may be a different mountain, though it has now the same name. There has been a great deal of debate on this subject. Several mountains have been supposed, by different writers, to be the one mentioned in the Bible; but most writers appear to suppose it was here.

Samuel. Is there any uncertainty about other places mentioned in the Bible?

Teacher. Yes, about the precise situation. Ancient writers were not so accurate in mentioning distances and directions as is common now. No geographies were written, and no maps drawn, so that the means of infor-

mation are very small, and our knowledge must of course be very general and imperfect.

Roger. But I thought there were maps of these countries, with all the places marked exactly upon them.

Teacher. No: the places are not always marked correctly. They are put down as nearly as they can be ascertained. You will find, however, by looking at any two ancient maps of the same countries, which are made by different persons, that they are very different. All the small turns in the rivers, the direction of the coasts, the precise places of the towns, and the shapes of the countries, vary much. In almost all important respects, however, they agree; for almost every thing which is important, in enabling us to understand the Bible, is certain.

Roger. How far is it from America, Sir, to those countries which you have been describing?

Teacher. Oh, it is several thousand miles—almost half around the globe.

As he said this, the teacher told the boys that it was about time to close the lesson for that evening; but before they went away, he wished to ask them some questions, so that he might see whether they remembered what he had told them. He then pointed to various parts of the map, asking them a great many questions, such as, What sea is this? What is the name of this river? What is this spot, colored yellow? And a great many other similar questions. He then rolled up the map, and asked them how many great seas there were about the countries mentioned in the Bible;—what their names were;—where each one was, and for what it was remarkable. He did the same with the rivers, and with the natural divisions of the land; and when he had thus ascertained that the boys had remembered well

Curious circumstance;—Mouths of rivers.

what he had told them, they all rose from the table, and the boys went away.

They walked along together, talking of what they had heard, until they arrived opposite to the house where John lived. John asked them to go in and look with him into his atlas, at the mouths of the rivers, to see whether the land was extended out into the sea, as at the mouth of the Nile. They accordingly went in, and they found John's sister and his mother sitting by the side of the fire, at work. John told them that they were come to look at some maps, and went and brought his atlas, and they all sat down around the table and looked at it, but they could not find any rivers whose mouths looked like that of the Nile. While they were examining the atlas, John's sister went out and presently returned with another atlas, which she said was an ancient one. She brought it to them, and asked whether it would not help them in finding what they wanted.

Samuel. We are looking at the mouths of the rivers. The teacher told us that the River Nile washed down from the mountains a great deal of soil every year, and deposited it along the banks and at the mouth of the river, and that by this means the land at the mouth had been gradually forming out farther and farther towards the sea. We were trying to find some other rivers that are so.

John. And we have looked at a great many, and they are all different.

The Sister. Have you looked at the Mississippi?

Roger. No. That is in North America. Here it is.

The boys examined the Mississippi, and found that it was like the Nile. The land at its mouth extended out into the sea, forming a cape, and the river flowed over it, and emptied into the sea at the extremity of the

Age of the world.

Travels in the Desert.

cape. And they supposed that this land had been formed by earth, which had been washed down by the river and deposited at its mouth.

Roger. I wonder whether these capes grow any now, every year, by the earth that is washed down ?

The Sister. I have read that they do. Some men once tried to prove that the Bible is not true, by bringing reasons to show that the earth has existed a much longer time than the Bible says, —

John. What were the reasons ?

The Sister. I do not know exactly, but it was proved by these rivers, in some way, that the world has not existed any longer than is said in the Bible.

Roger. We will ask the teacher more about it the next time we go.

The boys then looked into the ancient atlas to find a map like the one which the teacher had shown them. They found one which had the seas upon it, and the rivers ; but the mountains were made quite different, and it was divided into countries, and was covered with names. John tried to find some of the deserts colored yellow, to show his sister, but they were not represented upon that map. His sister said that she had been reading lately an account of travels in the desert, and she would bring the book and show them the place. She went out, and soon returned again, bringing a book, which she said were the travels of a certain Mr. Wood. She read from it the following passage :—

“ We left Hassia with an escort of the best Arab horsemen, belonging to the Aga, armed with guns and long pikes.”

John. What is the Aga ?

The Sister. I believe it was a sort of a chief, who gave Mr. Wood some of his soldiers to protect him. (She

Houses.

Water.

Caravan.

reads.) “ And having crossed a barren plain, which scarcely produces vegetables sufficient to feed the antelopes we saw there, we arrived at Sudud. This is a small village ; the houses are built of bricks, dried in the sun ; and the inhabitants cultivate only as much land about the village as is barely sufficient for their subsistence. The next day we continued to travel in the same direction, and arrived at Carieteen. We thought proper to remain here the rest of the day, as well to wait for the rest of the escort, which the Aga had ordered to accompany us, as to prepare our retinue and our cattle for the fatigue they were to suffer during the rest of our journey. For, though we could not perform it in less than twenty four hours, we were obliged to travel so long without repose, there being no water in that part of the desert.

“ We left Carieteen at ten in the morning, which was much too late ; but our company became much more difficult to manage in proportion as they became more numerous. This bad conduct occasioned our being exposed to the heat of two days before our beasts could obtain either rest or water ; and, though it was early in the season, the sand reflected the heat of the sun with great violence, while we had neither the slightest breeze to refresh us, nor the least shade to shelter us from its beams.

“ Our company was now much increased by its being joined by some merchants, so that it consisted of about two hundred persons, and nearly the same number of beasts of burden, which formed a grotesque mixture.”

Roger. Why did they travel in such a large company ?

The Sister. I believe they always do go across these deserts in large companies, called caravans, to protect

Arab horsemen.

Mock fights.

themselves better from robbers and wild beasts. (She reads.) "Our guide told us we were now in the most dangerous part of our journey, and desired us to submit entirely to his orders, which were, that the domestics should keep with the baggage, immediately behind our guard of Arab horsemen, from which were dispatched one, two or more horsemen on the discovery, to all the eminences before us, where they stayed till we came up with them. These horsemen always quitted the caravan on a full gallop.

"The road here was through a level sandy plain, bounded by a chain of barren mountains. Through the whole course, there is neither a tree nor a drop of water. But to take off our attention from the fatigue we endured, our Arab horsemen diverted us, from time to time, by engaging in mock fights. At night, they usually sat in a circle to drink coffee and smoke a pipe; and in the mean time one of the company diverted the rest by singing a song, or relating a piece of history, or a tale."

After John's sister had read this, she said that she believed that this was all which related to the desert; and she shut the book, and the boys soon after went home.

It was two or three days after this, that Roger met the teacher, walking in the road; and he stopped to inquire of him about the mouths of the rivers. He said that John's sister had told them that there was some way of proving how old the world was by these; and he asked him if he would explain it to him. The teacher stood a moment thinking, and then said that if Roger would speak to John and Samuel, and all three would call at his house on Saturday afternoon, he would take a walk with them, and talk about it. They accordingly did so.

The walk.The brook and the pond.

Early on Saturday afternoon they called at the door of the teacher's house, and he very soon came out, and they commenced their walk.

After they had proceeded a little way, they turned aside from the road, through a gate, and went across a field. Soon they entered a wood, and began to descend a hill; and in the valley below, they saw a brook running very rapidly over rocks and sands. When they came to the brook, they found that in many places the rocks were decayed and crumbling, and the banks had evidently been worn away by the water, and had caved in. The teacher explained to them that the water was constantly washing away the banks, and wearing the decayed stones; and he pointed out to them little banks of sand in the bottom of the brook, which had been formed by the water. He then told them that much of the earth thus washed away was carried down and deposited in the level land below, near and around the mouth of the brook; and as it emptied into a large mill pond, not far from them, he said they would walk down and see it.

They walked on accordingly, along the bank of the brook, until at last they came in sight of a large pond, into which the brook flowed. The water was very shallow in that part of the pond, and there were large sand-banks there. The solid ground too, at the mouth, extended out a considerable distance into the pond. After the boys had looked at this some time, they saw a boat with a man in it, upon the pond, coming towards the place where they were. When he had rowed the boat up to the shore, and fastened it, the following conversation took place:—

Teacher. Can you tell us, sir, whether the shore here was always shaped as it is now,—or was this land made by the brook?

The experiment and calculation.

Boatman. Oh, the land makes out here every year, by the brook; and it has ever since the dam was built. Here is a stake (pointing to a low stake about ten feet from the place where the brook ran into the pond,) which I drove down to fasten my boat to, about a year ago. It was then upon the shore of the pond, and now you see the land has made out as much as ten feet beyond it.

Roger. Does it make ten feet every year?

Boatman. I do not know that it does exactly as much as that every year. It depends some upon the rains. I should think it was not far from that.

Teacher. Then you see, boys, if we knew how far this land projects into the pond, and allow one year for every ten feet, we can tell pretty nearly how long it is since this pond was made by building the mill-dam below.

Samuel. I wish we could measure it.

Teacher. I think I can measure it tolerably well by pacing it.

So saying, the teacher paced the ground, and said he thought it was not far from forty feet from the present mouth of the brook, into where he supposed the brook met the shore of the pond at first. He then asked Samuel to make the calculation; and, after thinking a moment, Samuel said that it would take four years to make forty feet, if ten feet was made every year. The teacher said that was right; and then asked the boatman, if he could tell them how long it was since the pond was made.

Boatman. It is not so much as that. I believe it is only about three years.

Roger. Then we did not get it right.

Teacher. No: not exactly right; but it is as near as we could expect by such a kind of calculation.

By this time, the boatman had gone away into the

bushes, and the teacher and the boys began to walk slowly along by the shore of the pond. They continued talking as follows :—

Teacher. It is in the same way that they make calculations from the mouth of the Nile, to prove about how old the world is. Some men have said that the world is a great deal older than the Bible says, and have therefore tried to make men believe that the Bible does not come from God.

Samuel. What reason have they for thinking so ?

Teacher. They have thought so from the appearances of some rocks, in various parts of the world ; and then there are some books in eastern countries, which say that the world has been made hundreds of thousands of years.

Samuel. And did they make a calculation from the land at the mouth of the Nile ?

Teacher. Yes. A man endeavored to ascertain how much has been made, during fifty or a hundred years past, and from that to calculate how long the whole has been making. He made similar calculations from some other changes which are taking place in various parts of the world, such as the crumbling down of the sides of precipices, filling up of bays, and the progress of the sands of deserts, moved by the winds.

Roger. How did these calculations come out ?

Teacher. It is impossible to ascertain from them, with accuracy, how long it is since the creation of the world ; but they show that it must be about as long as the Bible declares. They prove positively that it cannot possibly have been as long as is stated in these other accounts.

You will find, boys, the older you grow, and the more you read and study, that many arguments have been

The end of the walk.

invented against the Bible ; but when they are thoroughly examined, they are always overthrown.

The party walked on, talking upon this and upon similar subjects, until they at last came out into the road again, and they then separated, and went by different ways to their several homes.

CONVERSATION III.

FIRST PERIOD OF SACRED HISTORY.

Teacher. Samuel, can you tell me what was the subject of our first conversation, which we had a fortnight ago?

Samuel. It was the reasons for believing that the Bible comes from God.

Teacher. And, Roger, can you tell me what was the subject of the last conversation?

Roger. It was the geography of the Bible.

Teacher. Yes: it was a general view of the natural condition of the countries which were the scene of scripture history. We now come upon another great subject, SCRIPTURE HISTORY, itself.

Samuel. Can we not read this history in the Bible, and so have you explain something else to us now?

Teacher. Yes: you can read it; but it is very long, and contained in a great many books, scattered along through the whole Bible. Now it will help you very much to understand and to remember the whole of this, if first I give you a general view of the whole, mentioning the principal events in their order, and showing you the places where they happened, upon the map.

John. Upon the map which you showed us last week?

Teacher. No: upon some other maps which I have drawn. Here is one for this evening, (unrolling a map like the one opposite this page.)

Explanation of the Map.

John. This is just about as large as the other one, but it looks very different.

Roger. Is it a map of the same country ?

Teacher. You may all examine it, and see if you can tell.

Samuel. I should think it was a map of part of the same country. Here is a part of the Mediterranean Sea, and of the Persian Gulf ; but the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea are not put down. It does not reach so far North as those seas.

Teacher. Yes. It is a map of part of the region laid down on the other ; and I will show you what part it is that is marked upon the other.

So saying, the teacher took down the other map, and showed them the square marked by the dotted line, *y y y y*, upon it.

Teacher. This second map contains only what is within these dotted lines on the first. But you see the paper is just as large as the other, and therefore all the parts may be made much larger, and you can see them more distinctly.

John. But this map is colored very differently from the other. I do not see the deserts and mountains.

Teacher. No. I have marked the *countries* on this map, because this is to study the history with.

Roger. But why do you take this particular portion of the other map ?

Teacher. I am going to explain that to you. I shall divide the whole time of the history into several portions, and shall make a map for each portion or period. This one is for the first period. Under each period I shall describe the principal events which took place ; the manners and customs of the people ; also their government

Creation.

Sabbath instituted.

and laws, and the particular geography of the country. To-night we shall attend to the FIRST PERIOD.

Samuel. How far does the first period extend ?

Teacher. From the Creation to the settlement of the Jews in the land of Canaan. I shall go on now to give you a short account of what took place in that time ; and I wish you, whenever you please, to ask me any questions about what I shall say.

The Bible begins with an account of the creation of the world. God spent six days in this work, and when they were ended, and he had created the sun, the moon, and the stars,—the ocean and the land,—trees, plants and flowers,—the various tribes of animals,—and lastly, Adam and Eve, he rested from his labors on the seventh day. He commanded also that all mankind should observe that day, and keep it holy.

Samuel. I never thought before that the establishment of the Sabbath was the first command that God ever gave to men.

Teacher. It is a remarkable fact. His making the command at this time, and without limiting it to any particular people, shows that he meant it to be observed by all nations, and in all ages. And yet some persons have thought that the observance of the Sabbath was required of the Jews alone ; that God only meant the command to be a part of the law of that nation. They forget that it was established long before the Jewish nation existed.

Roger. But is it put down among the laws of the Jews ?

Teacher. Yes : but God seems to have taken special pains to prevent our supposing that it was for them alone. We shall find, by and by, that the laws of the Jews were of two kinds : one kind were those which were for that nation only ; they related to ceremonies, &c. The other

The sin of Adam and Eve.

kind were those which it is the duty of every person in the world to obey. These are the ten commandments, as they are called. Now the command to keep the Sabbath holy, was written with these, upon tables of stone, while the others were only written in a sort of book ; as if God wished to show us that the Sabbath, which he had instituted as soon as the world was finished, was designed for all mankind. However, we must proceed with the history.

When Adam and Eve were created, God placed them in the garden of Eden. They were perfectly innocent and holy ; but you remember how they disobeyed God, by eating of a particular tree, which he commanded them not to eat of. In consequence of this, God sent them away from the garden, out into the wide world.

John. Why did God forbid them to eat of that tree ?

Teacher. I do not know, and I suppose they did not.—But that was of no consequence : they ought to have obeyed God, whether they knew the reason of his command, or not. Perhaps it was to try them.

Roger. Do you think, Sir, it was a very great sin,—just eating a little fruit ?

Teacher. Certainly it was,—a *very great* sin ; because it was disobedience of a plain command of God. It makes no difference, whether it was eating fruit, or any thing else. Suppose a mother should lay any thing down in a chair, and tell her child not to touch it ; and the child should disobey. Would it make any difference whether it was a pin or a silver dollar ?

John. No, Sir : I should not think it would.

Samuel. I should think it would be rather worse to touch the pin than the dollar.

Teacher. Why ?

Eden.

The flood.

Mount Ararat.

Samuel. It would be worse to disobey his mother for the sake of so little a thing as a pin.

Teacher. The smallness of the temptation is certainly no excuse. The sin of Adam and Eve was a voluntary and deliberate disobedience of God's command; and if the command had only been plainly made known to them, as it really had in this case, it makes no difference what it was.

But I must go on. The garden of Eden is supposed to have been here, (pointing to the place on the map marked Eden, near the mouths of the Tigris and the Euphrates.) When Adam and Eve had left it, they went out some where into the neighboring country, and began to labor for their bread. After some time, their children, and their children's children, became very numerous, and filled all this country, (pointing to the country around Eden.) These persons were, however, of very wicked characters; and God at last, as you undoubtedly remember, determined to destroy them by a flood of water. I need not describe this to you, for you have often read it; and you remember how Noah was saved in an Ark, which floated upon the water and at last rested upon the mountains of Ararat, which you see here, (pointing to Mount Ararat in the northern part of the map.)

John. How far did the ark sail? We can tell, if you know where it was built.

Teacher. I believe the Bible does not tell us where Noah lived; and it is not certain, as you recollect I told you before, that this mountain is the one on which it rested.

Samuel. Is it known how large a part of the earth was inhabited before the flood?

Teacher. No, it is not; and there are a great many

Chronological calculation.Babel.

other questions about this subject upon which little is known. The Bible gives us but little information about the world before the flood.

Roger. Is it known how long it was to the flood, after the creation?

Teacher. Yes: the Bible tells that. You will find, by looking into the fifth chapter of Genesis, that the ages of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah are given, and by adding these together we can find the whole length of time. But if you do it, you must be careful only to take the age of Adam when Seth was born, and the age of Seth when Enos was born, and so on. You will find, if you add them carefully, that it makes a little more than 1600 years;—almost as long as from the birth of Christ to the present time.

Roger. It was much longer than I supposed.

Teacher. Yes: we consider the time short, because but few events in it are described, and those in so few chapters.

After the flood, the earth began to be peopled again by the children of Noah. You remember their attempt to build Babel, and the manner in which God prevented it. They separated at Babel, and were scattered over all the countries then known. They continued to multiply and spread for many years, but they retained the character which men had always possessed since Adam's fall. They disobeyed God, neglected his worship, and broke his laws.

John. Did he destroy them by another flood?

Teacher. No. He had promised not to do that; and he had determined on a very different plan.

He resolved to choose some one family, and to take it, and all the descendants of it, under his special care,—to keep them together in a nation by themselves, and

Object of the call of Abraham.

The time.

to give them a fertile and pleasant country to dwell in ; to make known to them his commands and laws very fully, and at last to bring from among them the great Saviour, which he had promised to man immediately after Adam's sin. The person, whose family was selected, was Abraham, a man who, at the time when God chose him for this purpose, lived at Haran or Padan Aram, which you see here, (pointing to Padan Aram on the map.)

Samuel. What was the reason that God chose Abraham, rather than any other man ?

Teacher. I believe no reason is given in the Bible. It was undoubtedly right for him to choose whom he would, and to leave the rest of mankind to themselves ; for all knew, by conscience at least, what God required of them.

From this time, the Bible leaves the rest of the world, and confines itself to a history of what befel Abraham and his descendants, until the Saviour came.

Roger. Did Abraham know that God had chosen him ?

Teacher. Yes. God appeared to him, and commanded him to leave his country and go away to a place which he would point out to him, which command Abraham readily obeyed. This is what is meant by the *call of Abraham*, which is often mentioned in history. You can ascertain how long it was after the flood, in the way which I described to you for finding the time of the deluge.

Samuel. Are the ages of the patriarchs given for this time too ?

Teacher. Yes : in the eleventh chapter of Genesis there is a list of patriarchs, from Noah down to Abraham. I wish you would all look it out, when you go home, and add the ages, and tell me how long it was, when you come, next week.

Roger. We will. I never knew before what those

chapters of names were for. I used to think it would be better not to have them in the Bible.

Teacher. We must never suppose any part of the Word of God to be useless, even if we do not know what its use is.

John. But why could not the whole time be put down at once, without writing this whole chapter of names?

Teacher. There is a very good reason, which, however, I cannot stop to explain now. We must go on with the story of Abraham. He set out from his home, with his wife and family, and travelled westward, under God's direction, towards the Mediterranean Sea. There was a large company with them. He was a man of great property; and in those times men's property consisted not of houses, and lands, and money—but of great flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, and servants to take care of them. Abraham had a large train of this kind to follow him. He travelled slowly, stopping in fertile spots to feed his animals; and he built tents wherever he stopped, for himself and his people. His nephew Lot, too, went with him; and after some time, the whole company arrived in the North part of Canaan, here, (pointing to the map.) I marked his track by a dotted line. He then went toward the South, through the land of Canaan; and God repeatedly appeared to him—told him that this country was the one which his descendants were to live in—and promised to be with him, and to protect him, if he continued obedient and faithful. Abraham journeyed on, stopping at several places which are mentioned in the account in the Bible, and which are marked upon the map; until at last, when he was in the southern part of this country, there was a famine.

John. What is a famine?

Teacher. It is a scarcity of food, occasioned generally

The famine.Egypt.

by want of rain, so that the grain and the grass will not grow. These were very common in this country: many of them are mentioned in the Bible. In such a case, a man who has a great many flocks and herds and people to feed, must go into some other country, where there is plenty, or they would all suffer, and perhaps die.

Roger. Why could they not send and bring food?

Teacher. Because in those days it was much more difficult to transport things than it is now. There were no ships, no roads or wagons; and it took a great deal to feed Abraham's great company. Besides, they lived only in tents, which were easily taken down and moved.

John. How were the tents made?

Teacher. There is no way of knowing exactly; but there are now in those countries many people who live in the same way: they travel from place to place in large companies, with flocks and herds, and live in tents. These tents are now made of cloth, generally black cloth, stretched upon poles.

Abraham went down to Egypt, as you see his track marked upon the map, (pointing to the map,) after food. Egypt you know was very fertile, and well watered by the Nile. Here he remained some time, and then returned again to Canaan. But I must hasten on more rapidly with the story, and therefore will not stop to describe his offering up Isaac, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which took place at this time. He died at last in Canaan, A. M. 2183, or B. C. 1821, leaving his property in the hands of Isaac his son.

Isaac and his son Jacob, spent their lives too in this country. They had no settled home in it, but they wandered about as Abraham did, among the various tribes who possessed the land. Jacob, you know, had twelve sons; and you remember how, in consequence of their

God's care of his people.The Exodus.

selling Joseph to some merchants going to Egypt, and afterwards going there themselves to buy corn, and finding him in great wealth and power,—the whole family removed to Egypt and settled there. Here they increased very rapidly, and after some time the Egyptians made slaves of them, and they remained some hundred years in bondage.

Samuel. But did not God promise to take care of them?

Teacher. Yes, and he was taking care of them; he was constantly watching over them, and preparing in his own time to bring them out free. He undoubtedly had some good reason for permitting them to be enslaved. God always takes care of all who love and obey him; but notwithstanding this, he often brings them into great difficulties, though always for some good reason.

Roger. How did the children of Israel get away from the Egyptians?

Teacher. God appeared to Moses, one of them, and sent him to Pharaoh, to command him to let the people go.

John. And did he, Sir?

Teacher. No: he refused, and God sent plagues upon him and upon his people, until he complied. The last plague was causing the oldest child in every family in Egypt to die in one night. Then Pharaoh was very eager to have the Israelites go. He hurried them away that same night; and they all set out, six hundred thousand of them, immediately, on their journey towards Canaan, the land which God had promised to Abraham should be theirs.

Samuel. Were there six hundred thousand? They must have increased very much while in Egypt.

Teacher. Yes: you remember it was only Jacob and his sons and grandsons, about 70 persons, who went down

Passover.

Journey in the Wilderness.

to Egypt; and before they came out they had become this great multitude.

God commanded them always to celebrate the anniversary of their escape from Egypt; which they did in a feast held every year, called the Passover. This feast is very often mentioned in the Bible. Perhaps I shall explain to you more fully, by and by, how this was kept; but at present I must proceed with the story.

They passed across this extremity of the Red Sea, (pointing to *a* upon the map.) It was here that Pharaoh and his army were drowned, in attempting to pursue them to bring them back.

John. Then they came over into this wilderness, (pointing to the wilderness upon the map.)

Teacher. Yes: you remember I have described to you what sort of a country this was. There was nothing growing there which they could eat; although there were some trees and plants; and often there was no water for them.

Roger. Did they bring their provisions with them?

Teacher. No. They were many years travelling through this wilderness, and they could not carry enough. They were fed with manna, which God caused to come upon the ground every night for them. Water was obtained for them too, by a miracle, and there was a bright cloud, which shone like fire in the night, that always went before them to guide them.

Roger. How long did it take them to cross this wilderness?

Teacher. They did not go directly to Canaan. God first led them to the foot of Mount Sinai, where they encamped for many days; and God called Moses to go up the mountain alone. Then God gave Moses the laws which the people were to obey, both while they were trav-

elling in the wilderness, and when they should become settled in Canaan. And particularly, he gave him the ten commandments, written upon two flat pieces of stone. These were put into a chest, called the ark, made very handsomely of wood, but covered with gold, and carried by the priests taking hold of poles fastened to it. There were several other things made, which were used in the worship of God, such as an altar, &c ; and there was also a very large and splendid tent, called the tabernacle, under which these were kept when they stopped upon their journey.

Roger. Where is Mount Sinai ?

Teacher. You may try to find it upon the map.

Roger. Here it is, (pointing to Mount Sinai,) near the Red Sea. But this is not on the direct way from Egypt to Canaan.

Teacher. No. God did not design to bring them by the shortest way : he brought them to Mount Sinai, because he desired, for some good reasons, to give them their laws from this mountain. Besides, in consequence of their ingratitude and neglect, shown soon after they left Egypt, he determined that these persons should not enter Canaan.

John. But he had promised to Abraham that this nation should have Canaan to live in.

Teacher. So he had ; and the promise was to be accomplished. God only meant, now, to prevent the men who were ungrateful and disobedient soon after they came out of Egypt, from going into Canaan, and to keep them in the wilderness until their children should have grown up, and they themselves should have died.

Samuel. How long did they stay in the wilderness ?

Teacher. About forty years. They wandered about all this time, under the direction of Moses, remaining but a short time in a place, and living in tents, as Abraham

The Israelites' right to Canaan.

and his company had done. At last, they arrived at the banks of the Jordan, which was on the borders of the promised land.

John. Here is the river Jordan : is this (pointing to the dotted line *r*,) their track ?

Teacher. Yes. God permitted Moses to ascend a mountain, and look over the river into Canaan ; but he was not allowed to cross. He died there, and God appointed Joshua to succeed him. Then the Israelites passed over the river, and began to make war upon the inhabitants of Canaan, and to drive them away.

John. What right had they to do so ?

Teacher. They had no right of themselves ; and they would have done very wrong to have taken away from the Canaanites their country, had not God expressly ordered them to do so. He might have led the Canaanites away in a quiet, peaceable manner, to make room for his own people ; but he did not choose to do so. Undoubtedly for some very good reason they were made to suffer very much, probably because they had been great sinners ; and at last most of them were destroyed. The children of Israel then divided the land among themselves, giving to each tribe a particular share.

Roger. What was a tribe ?

Teacher. Do you remember how many sons Jacob had, when he went down to Egypt ?

Roger. Twelve.

Teacher. Yes, and the descendants of each of these sons were kept separate, and were called tribes. These tribes were called by the names of Jacob's sons. So we have the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of Ephraim, &c.

Samuel. But Joseph was one of Jacob's sons ; and we never hear of the tribe of Joseph.

Tribes.

The snow storm.

Teacher. True. And I will explain it to you next week. It is now time to end this lesson, as we have gone over the first great period in Sacred History, viz. from the Creation to the arrival of the Israelites at the land of Canaan. I wish, however, that before you come next time, you would make out from the Bible a list of the sons of Jacob, and another of the tribes; so that we can compare them, and explain better why there is not a tribe of Joseph.

John. I do not know where to look.

Teacher. You must consider in what part of the Bible it is probable this information would be given, and then look through several chapters, until you find it.

Samuel. I rather think we can find it.

The teacher then rolled up the map, and the boys went home; but on the way, they agreed to stop some day after school, at noon, and find the lists which the teacher requested them to look for. They walked on very fast, for it was a dark and windy night; and before they reached home it began to snow pretty fast. They all hoped that there was going to be a good snow storm, so that they might slide down hill and build snow forts, as they used to do the last winter: John said too that he was glad he was not obliged to live, like Abraham, in a tent, such a night as that. Before they reached home, Roger proposed that, in case it should continue to snow the next day, they would carry something for dinner to the school, and remain at noon; and then they should have full time for the work which the teacher had assigned them.

The next morning John awoke early, and looked out the window to see if it continued to snow. He saw that it was snowing very fast. The ground was covered, and the windows almost entirely obscured, so much had fal-

John's morning prayer.Samuel.

len in the night. John dressed himself immediately, and read a chapter in the Bible, and then knelt down to pray, as his mother had taught him. There were several things which he wanted to ask of God, which were not mentioned in the prayer which he had learnt; and he knew that it was not necessary to have words to express his requests, as God knew all his thoughts; so he continued a little time to pray in his mind. He asked God to take care of him that day; to keep him from sickness and suffering, and above all to keep him from doing any thing wrong. He prayed to be made dutiful and kind to his mother and sister, and grateful for all their goodness to him; to be kept from idleness and improper conduct at school;—from anger and pride, and every other wrong feeling towards his play-mates. He prayed too that God would bless his mother and sister, and keep them well and happy;—and his teacher too, for his goodness in explaining to him the Bible, and in endeavoring to prepare him for heaven.

When his morning devotions were ended, he went down stairs, and when the school hour arrived he set off for school. He waded along through the snow, with his dinner under his arm, until after a little time he saw Samuel coming up another road which led from his father's. John stopped for a moment to wait for him. Samuel had a little basket in one hand, in which John supposed he had put his dinner, and under his arm he had a very large book. As soon as he came near enough to hear, John addressed him.

John. What are you bringing that great Bible for, Samuel? We have plenty of little ones in school, and little ones are the handiest.

Samuel. It is not a Bible.

John. What is it, then?

Cruden's Concordance.School.

Samuel. It is Cruden's Concordance. My father lent it to us.

John. What is a Concordance ?

Samuel. It is a book for finding texts in the Bible. If you can tell me any text, I can, in a few minutes, tell you in what chapter and verse it is.

John. How ?

Samuel. All the words in the Bible are put down in it regularly, beginning at A, and going down to Z ; and then under each word, all the texts which have that word in it are put down, and the chapter and verse of each one is given.

John. Well, I do not see how you can find the texts by it.

Samuel. Why, suppose we want to find in what part of the Bible this passage is, "*Love your enemies.*" Now first, we look out any word, for instance, *enemies*, just as we should in a dictionary, and then we shall find under it all the verses in the Bible which have the word *enemies* in them. Then I have only to look along there until I find *love your enemies*.

John. I believe I understand it now ; let me try and see if I can find it.

Samuel. No, not here,—it is snowing, so as to wet the book and spoil it. You shall see it when we get to school.

John. Would it do to look any word in the text you want to find ? Could you look *love* and *your* ?

Samuel. Yes, I believe so. Father told me, though, that it is best to look for one of the principal words.

At last, the boys arrived at school ; and when all the lessons were finished, and the school had been dismissed, they sat down together to their work in a seat by them-

List of Jacob's sons.

selves, with their Bibles and Cruden's Concordance before them.

What we have to do, said Samuel, is to find the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, and also of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Yes, said John ; and the teacher said we must look along in the chapters until we find them. I will begin and look for the names of Jacob's sons.

So saying, he opened at the beginning of the Bible, and began to look along the verses of the first chapter of Genesis.

Stop, said Samuel, you cannot find Jacob's sons there.

Why not ? asked John.

Because, replied Roger, that is the account of the beginning of the world, and Jacob did not live until long after that.

Then I suppose we must look farther along, said John, turning over the leaves of his Bible. Here is something about Abraham, added he, looking on one of the pages.

We must look farther than that, said Samuel, for Abraham was the first,—the head of the family which God called. Jacob lived after him, just before they went into Egypt.

The boys continued to turn over the leaves, until they found where Jacob was mentioned. They found several chapters speaking about him, but there was no list of his sons, which they could find. At last, Roger proposed that they should look at the account of Jacob's going down into Egypt : he said he thought it would be very likely to tell there how many sons went down with him.

They accordingly looked for that place, and Samuel found it in the 46th chapter of Genesis. They found that at the 8th verse there commenced a long list of the names of those who went down into Egypt. There were, however, a great many more than twelve; and they found, upon examining them, that there were not only the names of Jacob's sons, but of the children of all these sons. Roger thought it would be very hard to pick out Jacob's twelve sons from these; but Samuel said he thought he could do it; and began to say, while he was looking upon the chapter, Reuben is one, in the ninth verse—Simeon, tenth verse, two, &c. He stopped, however, in a moment, and asked John to take a pen and paper, and write them down as fast as he should name them.

While they were doing this, Roger was looking on farther, in search of a better list, as he said; and before John had half written down Samuel's list, he interrupted them, saying—

There, I have found a much better place. Here they are, all the names together—1st chapter of Exodus, two or three of the first verses. But, continued he, you had better go on and finish your list, and then we will see how they agree.

When it was finished, John read it aloud, counting them as he read. It was as follows:—

Reuben, 1; Simeon, 2; Levi, 3; Judah, 4; Issachar, 5; Zebulon, 6; Gad, 7; Asher, 8; Joseph, 9; Benjamin, 10; Dan, 11; Naphtali, 12.

Roger then read the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses of Exodus, counting the names as he read them: Reuben, 1; Simeon, 2; Levi, 3; Judah, 4; Issachar, 5; Zebulon, 6; Benjamin, 7; Dan, 8; Naphtali, 9; Gad, 10; Asher, 11.

There are only eleven, said he : what is the reason of that ?

The boys then compared the two lists, and found that Joseph's name was omitted in the last list. They saw too that the reason was, that this was a list of those only who came to Egypt with Jacob ; and as Joseph was there already, his name was not down.

Now, said Samuel, we must find the list of the tribes ; and I believe we can find it best by Cruden's Concordance.

He explained to Roger, as he had already to John, how this book was used, and then they looked for the word *tribe*. They found under the word some explanation of it, before they came to the passages of scripture in which the word occurs. Samuel said, his father did not tell him about the explanations under the words, but he thought it would be a good plan to read this. So he read as follows :—

“ Jacob having twelve sons, who were the heads of so many families, which all together formed a great nation, every one of these families was called a tribe. But Jacob, on his death-bed, adopted Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, and would have them also to constitute two tribes of Israel. Instead of twelve tribes, there were now thirteen, that of Joseph being divided into two. However, in the distribution of lands to the people, made by Joshua, by the command of God, they counted but twelve tribes, and made but twelve lots ; for the tribe of Levi, which was appointed to the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, had no share in the distribution of the land, but only some cities to dwell in.”

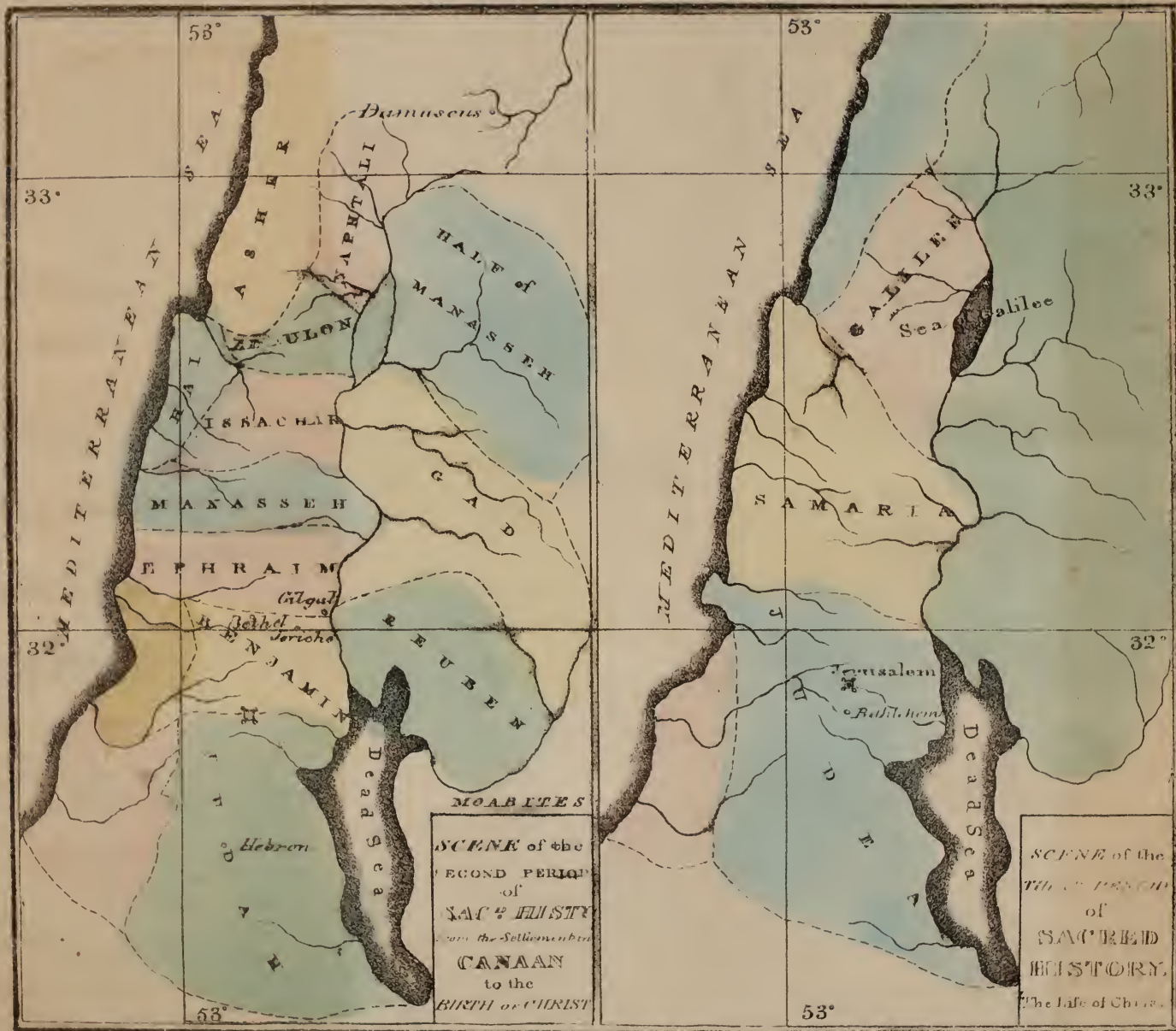
This explains the difficulty, then, said Samuel, without our finding a list of the tribes. We have only to take out

Tribe of Levi not reckoned.

Joseph's name, from the list, and put in Ephraim and Manasseh, and we shall have the names of the tribes.

But that will make thirteen, replied Roger.

Yes, said Samuel; and there were thirteen in fact, only the tribe of Levi is not usually reckoned, as they were only priests scattered among all the other tribes.



CONVERSATION IV.

SECOND PERIOD OF SACRED HISTORY.

ON the next appointed evening, the boys again assembled, and the teacher commenced the exercise by presenting before them a map like the one on the adjoining page. The boys observed that the map was divided into two parts, by a line drawn in the middle, and that the two parts were very much alike. They both had a part of the Mediterranean Sea, and the whole of the Dead Sea, drawn upon them; and the teacher explained to them that both parts were maps of a small portion of the land East of the Mediterranean Sea, and he showed them upon the map which they had examined at the second conversation, this portion marked off by the dotted line.

John. But why have you made two maps of the same country exactly alike?

Teacher. Look at the two parts of this map carefully, and see if they are *exactly* alike.

Roger. No, they are not: there are more countries marked upon this, (pointing to the one on the left,) and they are of different shape.

Samuel. Besides, the names of the places are different on the one from those on the other.

Teacher. Yes. It is only this, (pointing to the one on the left,) that we have any thing to do with now. I shall explain to you the other, when we come to use it. Can you tell me, Roger, where we left the history at the last lesson?

Jordan.

Mountains and streams.

Roger. They were, I believe, just about crossing the Jordan, to go and take possession of the land of Canaan.

Teacher. Yes. This is a map of the land of Canaan ; and before we take up the history, I must describe the map to you.

Here upon the West side is the Mediterranean Sea. Here you see, (pointing to *b*,) is the commencement of the river Jordan. It flows on a little way, and then passes through the sea of Galilee. Then it flows on South, and empties into the Dead Sea. Between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea was the principal part of the land inhabited by the Jews. Through the middle of this, there was a range of mountains running from North to South ; and from this many small streams arose, some flowing West to the Mediterranean, and others East to the Jordan, and the Dead Sea. You see many of these upon the map.

Roger. Why did some of them run one way and some the other ?

Teacher. Cannot you tell ?—Water always flows downwards ; and if there were streams really running as they are drawn upon the map, the land must have been higher in the middle, and it must have sloped both ways. This was the fact.

Samuel. Yes, I see the mountains here : this range, (pointing to the mountains *m m m*,) extends from North to South, through the whole distance.

Teacher. Yes : they were not very high mountains all the way, but only elevated land. In some places they rose into lofty summits, and these received particular names. I will not stop to point them out, however, now, because we must go on with the history.

We left the Israelites about crossing the Jordan, to take possession of the promised land. They had, however, settled some of their number upon the East side of

Settlement of the Tribes.

Jordan. John, how many divisions of countries are painted upon the east side of Jordan ?

John. Three : green, and yellow, and blue.

Teacher. Can you tell, by looking upon the map, what tribes were settled upon this side ?

John. The green spot is marked Reuben : does that mean that the tribe of Reuben lived in that country ?

Teacher. Yes : the whole map is divided into portions, according as the country was divided among the tribes, and the name of the tribe is marked upon each.

John. The others upon the East side are Gad and Manasseh.

Roger. Half of Manasseh, it says.

Teacher. Yes : only half of Manasseh was assigned to this side of Jordan. Can any of you find the other half ?

Samuel. Here it is, (pointing to the blue spot on the West side of Jordan.)

Teacher. Yes. Now these two tribes and a half had their inheritance upon the East side of Jordan, and the other tribes passed over the river, and established the camp at Gilgal.

John. Where is Gilgal ?

Teacher. (Pointing to the map.) Here it is, just across the Jordan, not far from where they passed over. From Gilgal, the army of the Israelites went to attack the cities of Canaan. By God's assistance, they were successful in their enterprizes, and they took a great many towns, and conquered a great many tribes.

Roger. What right had they to take away the land and the towns from the people who lived there ?

Teacher. They would have had no right, if God had not expressly required them to do so. The country was God's, and the Canaanites who dwelt in it were creatures of his power ; and of course he had a right to do what he

The Canaanites.Judah and Benjamin.

chose with them, or to direct any others to do what he wished. Now this was the land which he had designed for the country of his people, the descendants of Abraham; and now that they were ready to enter it, he had a perfect right to remove all who were there.

Samuel. Did the children of Israel destroy all the Canaanites?

Teacher. No. Some they made slaves, and others God did not permit them to conquer. These remained in various parts of the country, and afterwards caused the Israelites some trouble by making war upon them. You will find, by looking into the first chapter of Judges, who these Canaanites were that were left, and what part of the land they inhabited.

The land, however, was generally conquered, and then divided among the tribes; so that there were nine tribes and a half upon the West side of the river, and two tribes and a half upon the East side. I shall not stop to have you learn where all the tribes were settled, but only ask you to notice two, Judah and Benjamin. You see this large green spot, West of the Dead Sea. This was given to Judah, and Benjamin had a small territory here, just North of it.

Samuel. Why must we notice these particularly?

Teacher. Because Judah was the tribe from which Christ was to be born, and Benjamin and Judah remained together for a long time, as we shall see presently.

After the Israelites were well established in the land, Joshua, their leader, who succeeded Moses, died and left them without any general head. They were, however, quietly settled in their various districts, and were governed by magistrates scattered over the country. But they soon forgot Jehovah, and began to worship idols, and other gods. In consequence, they were a great many

Judges.

Samuel.

Saul.

times delivered into the hands of their enemies, who made war upon and conquered them. When they repented, and forsook their sins, God raised up some champion to deliver them. This was the case a great many times, and the stories of these deliverances are all very interesting. You remember the account of Samson, the strong man; he was one of these champions. These stories are found in the book of the Judges.

Samuel. Why is it called the book of Judges?

Teacher. Because these champions were called Judges, and this book gives an account of the Israelites, while they were under the government of the Judges.

Roger. How long was this?

Teacher. This state of things continued until the people desired a king, and they made known their request to God, by means of Samuel, a very distinguished prophet, who was living among them at that time. God was displeased with their request, but he granted it, and gave them a king.

Roger. I should have thought that if he was displeased, he would have punished them by refusing to grant their request.

Teacher. No: to refuse to give them a king, would have been no punishment. When men have vain and ambitious desires, the worst punishment, which can be inflicted, is to gratify them. The Israelites found this to be the case.

Saul was the first king. But I cannot stop to go over all his history. You must read it carefully in the Bible. I can only say he commenced by pretending to obey God, but he really aimed at nothing but his own interest and power. He soon began to disobey God, in what he considered little sins: his transgressions became soon more open and more aggravated: he soon suffered the

Why Christ's coming was delayed.

bitter consequences of disobeying his Creator ; but his difficulties and troubles did not lead him to repent, and to ask God's forgiveness ; and at last he lost every thing for which he had been striving, and died a miserable death.

John. How did he die ?

Samuel. Was he not killed in battle ?

Teacher. I believe we must not stop now to speak of the particular manner of his death ; for you can read this and all the other particulars of his history in the Bible. Our object now is, you know, only to run over rapidly the train of Scripture events, so as to give you a connected view of the whole.

Samuel. I should like to ask one question before you go on. I think you mentioned that the reason why God chose Abraham and his descendants, to keep them a separate nation under his care, was, that he designed to bring the Saviour into the world among them. Why did not Christ come now, as soon as they were well settled in their country ?

Teacher. The reasons are not given, I believe, in the Bible, though there were undoubtedly good reasons ; as the time when Christ was born, is often alluded to as a time set or appointed long beforehand. There are, however, some reasons which I have thought of. One is, that the coming of a great Saviour was foretold early to the Jewish nation ; and by waiting some time, until this prophecy should become thoroughly made known to this and to other nations,—until they should have waited a long time in expectation of its fulfilment, the appearance of the Saviour at last would excite more general attention, and produce greater impression. The other reason was, that the world was probably in a much better state for receiving the Christian religion afterwards, than it was then.

David's life and actions.

Solomon's Temple.

But we must go on. God chose David to be the next king after Saul. You all remember something about him. He was at first a shepherd's boy ; and the story of the manner in which he rose from his father's cottage to the throne is very interesting. He made Jerusalem his residence. Here you see the city, on the borders between Judah and Benjamin. This afterwards became a great city.

Roger. Did David build it first ?

Teacher. No. A city was begun there before the Israelites came to Canaan. They did not get possession of the whole of it, however. There were some Jebusites in it, who went into a strong part of it, perhaps a part surrounded by a wall, and the Israelites could not drive them out. David, however, attacked and conquered them, and took the whole city into his power.

Not long after this, David thought of building a great temple for the worship of God. He collected a great many things necessary for building it ; but God said to him that he should prefer to have Solomon, his son, build it. David reigned a great many years very prosperously, and saw the kingdom advancing in wealth, and power, and happiness.

John. Was he a good man ?

Teacher. Yes : he was a very pious man, and loved and served God. He was, however, guilty of several great sins ; but he sincerely repented of them, and God forgave him. At last he died, and his son Solomon reigned after him.

The reign of Solomon is remarkable for an important event—the building of the temple of God, at Jerusalem. This building was large and splendid, and is very often spoken of in the Bible. Solomon made great efforts to bring together large quantities of cedar-wood and stone, also gold and silver and brass and iron. He sent into all

Use of the Temple.

The revolt.

the surrounding countries for workmen who were skilful, and did every thing in his power to make God's house as magnificent as possible.

John. How large was it ?

Teacher. All the buildings and walls covered a very large piece of ground ; but the principal building was about ninety feet long and thirty wide. Perhaps I shall give you a more particular description of the temple hereafter : at present I can stop only to say that Solomon spent many years in building it, and he employed many thousands of men. He also made a large number of vessels of gold and silver, to be used in the temple ; and when all was finished, the house and all which it contained were dedicated to God by very solemn ceremonies.

Samuel. What was the temple for ?

Teacher. It was to be the place where many of the rites and ceremonies which God required of the Jews, were to be performed, such as sacrifices, &c. The people came here, in great numbers too, to worship God. You will often see it mentioned in reading the Bible.

Samuel. It is often mentioned in the New Testament.

Teacher. Yes : though this was after it had been destroyed and rebuilt, as I shall soon describe to you. But I must hasten on to give you an account of a great revolution which took place in the government of the Israelites, after Solomon's death.

The three kings who had reigned thus far, had governed all the twelve tribes ; but now they were separated. You can read the account of this revolution in the first of Kings, or in the first of Chronicles : it is a very interesting story.

Roger. Are there two accounts of it ?

Teacher. Yes : the books of Kings and of Chronicles describe the same events, as I shall show you more fully

hereafter. As I said before, however, the tribes were now separated. The two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, which I showed you on the map, remained under Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the rightful king; and the other twelve tribes rebelled against him, and established a separate government under Jeroboam, a man who had been one of Solomon's officers. This event is called the revolt of the ten tribes, and from this time there were two separate kingdoms; one was called Judah, and the other Israel.

Roger. Which was called Judah?

Teacher. That composed of Judah and Benjamin. I suppose it was called Judah because Judah was much larger than Benjamin. The tribe of Judah was always the largest tribe, and always seemed to take the foremost place. I do not know but that I told you before, that this was the tribe from which the Saviour was to come.

Samuel. I remember that you did.

Teacher. The other kingdom was called the kingdom of Israel, I suppose because a great portion of the tribes of Israel belonged to it. These two kingdoms continued a long time; each had its own kings, and officers, and armies.

John. Why did not the king of Judah go to war against the king of Israel, and make the ten tribes come back to and strengthen the kingdom?

Roger. Because the ten tribes were more numerous than the two.

Teacher. No, that was not the reason; God might easily have delivered the armies of the ten tribes into the hands of Judah and Benjamin; but he had resolved upon this separation, as a punishment for the sins of the Israelites, and he meant it should continue. There were, how-

ever, some wars between Judah and Israel; but they were never united again.

Very soon after this separation, the ten tribes began to be very idolatrous and wicked. They abandoned God, and worshipped two images of calves which Jeroboam set up. In consequence of their sins, they were for many years oppressed by a line of wicked and tyrannical kings, who grew worse and worse, and who excited God's displeasure very strongly against them, and at last the armies of distant nations were permitted to come and conquer them, and carry them away into captivity. First those two tribes and a half who were settled on the East side of the river were taken. You see by the map that they were most exposed by their very situation. Not long after, another army came, conquered the other seven and a half tribes, and carried them away into captivity, from whence they never returned.

Samuel. What became of them?

Teacher. It is not certainly known. There have been several different opinions about it; but they are not mentioned any more in the Bible, and of course we cannot positively ascertain; and it is of less consequence to know, as the tribe of Judah, the one from which the Saviour was to come, still remained.

Samuel. Did Judah and Benjamin continue to serve God?

Teacher. Not at all times: sometimes the kings were wicked, and established idolatrous worship, and thus led the people into sin. Then perhaps a good king would reign, and endeavor to restore the worship of God. They however grew less and less devoted to the service of God, and offended him much by their sins. God wished them to repent and return to him; and he accordingly sent several prophets, at different times, to warn them of their

The Prophets.Isaiah.

guilt, and the danger that God would bring some dreadful punishments upon them, unless they should lead different lives.

Roger. Is any thing said about these prophets in the book of Kings ?

Teacher. Not much ; but their messages to the people are in the Bible,—in the last part of the Old Testament.

Samuel. I did not know that those prophets lived in the time of the kings.

Teacher. Many of them did. It tells, in the beginning of many of these books, when the authors lived. Will you find the beginning of one of them ? (handing Samuel a Bible.)

Samuel. Here is Isaiah.

Teacher. Can you tell now when Isaiah lived, by the first verse ?

Samuel. Yes : it says, “ the vision which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”

Teacher. Yes : now look in the book of Kings, and see where the account of these kings is given.

The teacher then gave the boys Bibles, and they all looked in Kings and Chronicles, and found the chapters in which the reigns of these kings are described. The teacher then requested them to look in those chapters, and see if Isaiah the prophet is mentioned ; because, said he, if he lived at that time, it would be very probable that some mention would be made of him. The boys accordingly looked, and Roger found in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter of Kings an account of Hezekiah's being sick, and of his sending messengers to Isaiah the prophet. They also found Isaiah mentioned in Chronicles.

Captivity of Judah.

Babylon.

Teacher. Now if we should in the same manner examine the other prophetic books in the latter part of the Old Testament, we should find in many of them that the authors lived in the times of the kings, and that they contain many very solemn warnings to the Jewish people, of the danger of exciting God's displeasure, by idolatry and other sins.

Samuel. Did these messages from God have an effect upon the people?

Teacher. Sometimes they produced a little effect, but it did not usually last long. The people on the whole grew worse; and God at last permitted a great and powerful king to come with a large army, conquer the country, and to carry away the people captive, just as the ten tribes had been carried away before.

Roger. Who was this king?

Teacher. It was Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Do you know where Babylon was?

Samuel. Yes: I believe it was East of the country of Canaan. I saw it upon the other map.

The teacher then brought the map like the one placed before the third Conversation in this book, and there they found the city of Babylon marked. It was near the river Euphrates. The teacher explained to them that since Abraham had left the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, and while his descendants had been growing into a great nation between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, there had been springing up, upon the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, a great and powerful empire, whose capital city was Babylon, which was a very spacious and magnificent city.

Teacher. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon at this time; and he, as I said before, came to Judea, as the land

A siege.

Surrender.

Second siege.

inhabited by Judah and Benjamin was called, and conquered the country. He marched to Jerusalem and besieged it.

John. What do you mean by besieging it?

Teacher. He brought his armies all around it, and tried to get into it, to take possession of the houses, and to make the people prisoners.

John. Why could he not march directly into the city?

Teacher. Oh, because it was surrounded by very high and thick walls, and the gates were guarded by the soldiers of the Jews, who were in the city.

Roger. How did he get in at last?

Teacher. He made engines to break down the walls, and he built forts outside, from which they shot arrows and spears into the city, to kill the men who were upon the walls. But the principal thing was to surround the city with his armies, and so to prevent any body from going in to carry food for the people. By this means in a short time, the people eat all the provisions which were in the city when Nebuchadnezzar came, and then they had nothing to keep them from starving; so that they were willing to open the gates and let him in, because they had rather be taken prisoners than to be starved.

John. What did Nebuchadnezzar do, when he was in the city?

Teacher. He took all the principal men and the king, and all the treasures of the temple, especially the most valuable of the vessels of gold and silver, and carried them away with him to Babylon.

Samuel. Then he did not carry all the people captive.

Teacher. No: but he afterwards came again, and besieged the city a second time. He took it this time too, and destroyed the wall and the houses, and burnt the

Servitude of the Jews for seventy years.

splendid temple that Solomon had built. He also carried away great numbers of the people to Babylon.

Samuel. Did he carry them all at this time ?

Teacher. No, not quite all ; there were a few left, and Nebuchadnezzar placed one of his officers over them, and left them in the land.

John. What did Nebuchadnezzar do with all the Jews, when he had brought them to Babylon ?

Teacher. Many of them were made servants, and others settled quietly in Babylon, under the dominion of the king, and probably paying him money every year. They were not happy while they were here, and were always longing to return to Jerusalem.

Roger. I supposed that God had promised to take care of this nation, and to preserve them until the Saviour was born.

Teacher. He had done so, and he had not now forgotten his promise. The reason why they were carried captive, was to punish them for their repeated and continued idolatries. He had distinctly told them, before they came into Canaan, that if they should abandon him and sin against him, he should not protect them from their enemies. And now he was designing, after allowing the kings of Babylon to retain them seventy years, to restore them again to their country.

John. And did they return after seventy years ?

Teacher. Yes.

John. How did they get away ?

Teacher. There was another country beyond Babylon, called Persia : we will find it upon the map.

Samuel. Here it is, (pointing to the map,) near the Persian Gulf ; but on the east side of the Tigris.

Teacher. Yes. Now there arose in this country a very wise and powerful monarch, whose name was Cyrus. God

Cyrus's stratagem.Return.

caused him to come to Babylon, and gave him power to conquer it. It is said that Cyrus gained possession of the city in a very singular way. The city was partly upon one side of the river Euphrates, and partly upon the other ; and the wall which surrounded it passed across the river upon a sort of a bridge. Now Cyrus, instead of trying to beat down the wall by engines, set his men at work to dig a new channel for the river just above the city. The water ran off in this new channel, and left the old one, under the bridge into the city, dry. Then Cyrus marched his army into the city on the old bed of the river.

Roger. Is it certain that this is true ?

Teacher. I believe it is not perfectly certain ; but at any rate, it is certain that Cyrus conquered Babylon, and not long after made a decree that the Jews might return to their own country.

Samuel. Is there much account in the Bible of what the Jews did while they were at Babylon ?

Teacher. Not a great deal. The book of Daniel is an account of transactions there, and contains many interesting stories. Some of the prophecies, too, relate to this time.

But we must pass on to the return of the Jews. They came in companies from Babylon to Jerusalem, under the direction of several leaders, among whom were Ezra and Nehemiah, who each wrote accounts of the transactions which they witnessed.

Samuel. Are these the books of Ezra and Nehemiah ?

Teacher. Yes. They describe the return of the Jews, the rebuilding of the temple, and the walls of the city. The Jews met with much opposition from the neighboring people ; but, notwithstanding this, they went onward and finished the work, and they at last became comforta-

bly and quietly settled in their former homes. Here ends the Old Testament history.

Samuel. And was Christ born immediately after this ?

Teacher. Oh, no. There was a long interval of which no account is given in the Bible. We can learn, however, what happened during this time, by other histories. The Jews did not live in peace during this time. After the Persian empire had existed some time, there arose another great empire, the Grecian, which conquered the Persian, and obtained possession of almost all the countries in that part of the world. Can you tell where Greece was ?

Samuel. Yes : it was North of the Mediterranean Sea. I believe it is on the first map which you showed us.

The Teacher then showed them the first map again, and Samuel found Greece upon it : it was a green spot, marked *r 1*, North of the Mediterranean.

Teacher. The Jewish nation continued some years under the power of the Greeks, and a great many of the people learned and spoke the Greek language. There are a great many allusions to this fact in the New Testament. The apostles found Greeks wherever they went : and even the New Testament itself was written in Greek.

Samuel. I thought the Jews were under the Roman power at the time of Christ.

Teacher. They were so. Can you tell where Rome was ?

John. Yes : it was in Italy, upon the Tiber.

They then looked upon the same map upon which they had found Greece. Samuel said that he thought that the part marked *r 2*, a spot west of Greece, was Italy ; but he did not exactly know upon what part of it Rome was.

Teacher. The city was near the West side. It became the centre of the wealthiest, most powerful, and

Roman Conquest.Close.

most extensive empire that the world ever saw. It conquered Greece, and almost all the countries which were dependent upon Greece; and of course Judea fell under its power. The language of the Romans was what is called the Latin language, and this was now spoken some among the Jews. You remember when Christ was crucified, Pilate caused the inscription over him to be written in three languages,—the Hebrew, which was the old Jewish language—the Greek—and the Latin. The facts, which I have been explaining to you, show you the reason of this.

Samuel. And are not the Romans themselves often mentioned in the New Testament?

Teacher. Yes. The principal rulers of Judea were Romans; and there were officers and soldiers stationed in the large towns, to keep the country in subjection.

But it is now time to close this lesson, as the hour has passed, and we have finished the Second Period of Sacred History, which extends from the settlement in Canaan to the birth of Christ.

CONVERSATION V.

THIRD PERIOD OF SACRED HISTORY.

WHEN the class had assembled, at the time appointed for the next exercise, the teacher unrolled the same map which he had used on the preceding evening. The readers of this book will recollect that this map was divided by a line in the middle, into two parts, which were considerably but not exactly alike, and that only the first part was used in the last Conversation. The teacher commenced the exercise by explaining the last half of this map. The reader will find it at the beginning of the fourth Conversation.

Teacher. You see, as I believe I explained to you at the last exercise, that this sheet contains two maps, both of the same countries; for you see that both have the same seas and rivers.

Roger. Yes, but they are painted differently, and they have different towns and countries marked upon them.

Teacher. Yes. Now can any of you tell the reason of this?

Samuel. I suppose that the maps were made for different times.

Teacher. How? What do you mean by that?

Samuel. Why, this map (pointing to the one upon the left hand) is divided into tribes; and it shows how the country was, when all the tribes were there: but after the ten tribes were carried away, and the country was settled by others, it was probably divided differently, just as it is

Description of the Maps.

upon this map, (pointing to the one upon the right hand.)

Teacher. Yes : the first map represents the country East of the Mediterranean Sea, as it was in the time of the twelve tribes of Israel, when it was called Canaan. The second shows the same country as it was afterwards, in the time of Christ. You will observe that there are several great divisions upon this second. The first you see here, (pointing to the blue spot) upon the southern part, West of the Red Sea.

Samuel. Is not this the same that was inhabited by Judah and Benjamin ?

Teacher. It is, pretty nearly. It was upon this that the Jews principally settled, upon their return from Babylon. The capital city is Jerusalem, which you see here, (pointing to Jerusalem.) This is the most important part of the map. Directly North of it, you see a large yellow spot : it is called Samaria. John, can you tell me who were the former inhabitants of this part of the country ?

John. I can tell by looking upon the other map—(after looking)—the tribes of Issachar, Manasseh, and Ephraim.

Teacher. And what became of these tribes ?

John. They were carried away with the ten tribes, and never returned.

Teacher. Yes : but they were not all carried away : some were left, and other persons came in and settled among them. There was a large city, called Samaria, in this country, which was the capital. The people who lived here tried to prevent the Jews from building the temple, when they returned from Babylon ; and there was always after, a great enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans.

John. Were there any wars between them ?

Teacher. None mentioned or alluded to in the Bible. There was, however, a great hatred between them. Will

you find, John, (giving him a Bible) the 4th chapter of John, and read the 9th verse ?

John. (Reading.) "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria ? (for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.)"

Teacher. This verse shows you what was the feeling between these nations. I shall explain to you presently why Christ was in Samaria at this time. North of Samaria you see a red spot : it is Galilee. It was in this province that the Saviour spent a great part of his life upon the earth. You see East of it a sea. Roger, can you read the name of it ?

Roger. The sea of Galilee.

Teacher. Yes : it was also sometimes called the lake of Gennesaret. These three provinces, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, are the most important, and in fact the only important parts of the map. There are one or two countries more North and South, and there is all the country beyond Jordan, called sometimes Perea.

I must not, however, spend any more time in describing the map, but must go on with the history of Christ. At the time of his birth, you know, the Jews were under the Romans, and Herod was the king whom the Roman emperor had put over them. He reigned at Jerusalem.

John. Was Christ born at Jerusalem ?

Teacher. No. His parents lived in Galilee, in a place called Nazareth. You see it here, (pointing to Nazareth upon the map.)

Samuel. Were they not Jews ?

Teacher. Yes. You remember I told you Christ was to come from the tribe of Judah.

Samuel. Why then were they living so far from Judea ?

Teacher. I do not know. But it was a fact that many

 Christ's parentage and birth.

 Herod.

Jews became scattered after the captivity, over all the surrounding country, so that there were some in almost all the cities and large towns. I do not know what was the particular reason why Joseph and Mary were settled in Nazareth.

Christ, however, was not born in Nazareth; he was born in Bethlehem, which you see here, (pointing to the map,) just South of Jerusalem, where his parents had gone to pay a tax to the Romans.

Roger. Did his parents carry him then home to Nazareth?

Teacher. No. Herod the king, who was here at Jerusalem, heard that the Jews expected a king to be born among them about that time, and he heard too, in a very singular way, which you can read in the 2d chapter of Matthew, that a child which had just been born in Bethlehem was probably the one.

Samuel. Did the Jews expect a king?

Teacher. Yes: Christ is often called in the Bible a king; but it does not mean that he was to be the head of a nation and an army, but only that he was to reign in the hearts of all holy men. The Jews, however, expected that the Saviour promised in the Old Testament was coming to deliver them from the Romans, and to make them a separate and independent nation, as they were in the time of David and Solomon.

Now Herod heard of this, and began to be afraid that he was going to lose his kingdom.

John. What did he do?

Teacher. He sent to Bethlehem, and had all the young children there killed, in hopes to kill Christ among the others.

Roger. And how did Christ escape?

Teacher. God sent his angel to tell Joseph of the dan-

ger, before Herod's messengers arrived ; and Joseph took Mary and the child, and fled into Egypt, where they were safe.

John. Where was Egypt ?

Teacher. Do you not recollect to have ever heard of it before ?

John. (Thinking.) Yes, Sir ; it was where the children of Israel were in bondage, down somewhere here, (pointing to the South West corner of the map.) Why is it not put down ?

Teacher. Because this map does not extend far enough to take it in. We might find it by looking at one of the other maps.

Roger. How long did they stay in Egypt ?

Teacher. Until they heard that Herod was dead ; and then they ventured to return home to Nazareth, here in Galilee, (pointing to the map,) where they lived until Christ was about thirty years of age.

Samuel. I thought our Saviour went to Jerusalem when he was twelve years old.

Teacher. So he did, but he returned immediately ; so that during all the early part of his life he lived in Galilee. There is very little account of him during this time in the Bible.

Samuel. Did he not begin to preach and to work miracles before he was thirty years old ?

Teacher. No. He began but about two or three years before his death. I shall not describe his journeys particularly after this. He used to spend most of the time in travelling about Galilee, only once every year, at the celebration of the passover, that great feast which I have already described to you, he went to Jerusalem, where he had many interesting adventures. In these journeys he

was of course obliged to go through Samaria, but he seldom remained long in this province.

Roger. Did the people believe him ?

Teacher. Not a great many, though sometimes he was followed by great crowds, to hear what he said and to see his miracles.

He chose twelve of his friends, to be with him all the time, and he gave to them a great many instructions. Once he sent them forth, two by two, into all the villages and towns around, to preach and to endeavor to convince the people that the long promised Saviour had come.

Samuel. Did he not once send away seventy for this purpose ?

Teacher. Yes. But all was not enough to persuade the Jews to receive him as their Saviour. They had set their hearts on having some one come to deliver them from the Romans, and they could not bear to think that the Saviour, whom they had been so long expecting, had come only to show them how to be reconciled to God, and to prepare for heaven.

In consequence of this, a great many of them became his enemies ; and he charged them so plainly and so forcibly with the great sins of which they had been guilty, that they became very angry with him. At last, one year when he was at the passover at Jerusalem, they formed a plan to destroy him. Jesus knew all their designs, and foreseeing that he was about to die, he spent a great deal of time with his twelve disciples, giving them his last instructions, and endeavoring to prepare them for the great sufferings they were soon to undergo.

John. Why did not he escape from Jerusalem, and save his life ?

Teacher. Because he came into the world to die for sinners ; and now the appointed time had arrived, and he

Cedron.

Gethsemane.

Judas.

did not shrink from the suffering, or have any wish to escape. After he had finished his instructions, he went out of the city, leading his disciples with him across the brook Cedron.

Roger. Where is the brook Cedron ?

Teacher. Do you see (pointing to the map) this little brook running by the East side of Jerusalem, and then turning and flowing off into the Dead Sea ?

Roger. Yes ; but it has no name.

Teacher. The name is not written upon the map, but it was called Cedron. On the other side of this brook was a retired but pleasant place, called the garden of Gethsemane ; and beyond this rose a hill, called the Mount of Olives. Our Saviour spent the night here in prayer ; and he suffered great mental agony, so that he sweat as it were drops of blood.

John. Was it because he was afraid to die ?

Teacher. No, probably not. A great many others have met with death in the most cruel form, with perfect composure, and Jesus was certainly not deficient in fortitude. No, the great object of Christ's coming into the world was to bear sufferings which we had deserved for our sins, so that we might be forgiven ; and a considerable part of the suffering which he endured for this purpose was his agony in the garden,—though we cannot tell precisely what the nature of it was. Very early in the morning, our Saviour and his disciples saw a large company coming out of Jerusalem, over Cedron, to take him.

John. How did they know where he was ?

Teacher. Do you not recollect that he was betrayed ?

John. Yes, Sir, by Judas.

Teacher. Yes : Judas, one of his twelve disciples, had been hired by the Jews to show Christ to them. He accordingly brought them to Gethsemane, where he knew

The Sanhedrim.Trial in the morning.

Christ was; and they took him and carried him into the city.

But before I go on any farther, I must explain to you how it was that persons were tried, when they were accused of crimes in Jerusalem, at this time. When the Romans conquered Judea, they did not take the government entirely away from the Jews. There was a great council of this nation which the Romans permitted to remain, to make some kinds of laws and to punish criminals, in any way except putting them to death. Whenever any one had committed a crime for which the Jews thought that he deserved death, they were not permitted to punish him in that way, without first bringing him to the Roman governor, and obtaining his consent. This great council of the Jews was called the Sanhedrim.

Roger. I never saw that name in the Bible.

Teacher. I believe the name is not mentioned in the Bible; but the meetings of the council are often mentioned in such a way as this:—"the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together."

John. How do they know that the name of the council was Sanhedrim?

Teacher. From other histories written in these times.—Well, as soon as it was day-light, they brought Jesus into this council.

John. Why, was it dark when they came out after him, at Gethsemane?

Teacher. Yes: you remember I said that he spent the whole night there; and his enemies came out very early, before day, to take him. They had to bring lanterns and torches.

Samuel. Why did the Sanhedrim meet so early?

Teacher. It is said that this was the usual time of their meeting. But however this was, they met soon after day-

Roman jurisdiction.Crucifixion.

light at this time, and proceeded to examine Christ. Caiaphas, the high priest, was at the head of the council.

Roger. I do not see what crime they could accuse him of.

Teacher. They accused him of blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God ; and they pronounced him worthy of death : but then, as I said before, they could not put him to death without the consent of the Roman governor. So they carried him away to the governor, whose name was Pilate.

Pilate saw very soon that he did not deserve to die, and so he told the Jews, and at first refused to have him put to death. But the Jews urged him again and again to grant their request ; and a great multitude of people collected, and kept crying out continually, " Let him be crucified." At last the governor consented ; and they took the Saviour, and, after heaping upon him many insults and injuries, they led him away to a hill called Calvary, West of Jerusalem, and there they crucified him.

Jesus bore it all with perfect patience and submission. His disciples had forsaken him and fled in terror, so that he was alone among his enemies ; and he made no resistance, and no effort to escape. When they reproached and insulted him, he heard them silently, and made no reply ; and at last, when he was dying upon the cross, he prayed to God to forgive them. About noon he died.

He remained upon the cross during the afternoon, and towards night some of his friends asked Pilate to permit them to take down the body and place it in a tomb. He gave them permission ; and the body was placed in a tomb, where it remained all the next day, which was the Sabbath.

Roger. Then he was crucified on Saturday.

Resurrection.

Conclusion.

Teacher. No, on Friday. Saturday was the Sabbath in those days. It was changed to Sunday afterwards.

John. For what reason?

Teacher. I will explain the reason presently. As I said before, he remained in the grave through the Sabbath; but very early on Sunday morning they came to the tomb, and found that the body was gone. There was an angel there, instead, who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Samuel. I supposed that he was in the grave three days.

Teacher. No, strictly speaking, not three full days. He rose from the dead on the *third* day after he was crucified, and on this account he is sometimes said to have been three days in the grave.

Roger. Where did Christ go after he had risen?

Teacher. He appeared several times to his disciples at Jerusalem, and then directed the eleven to go to Galilee, where he said he would meet them. This you remember was where he had spent his early days. He saw them after this many times; gave them his parting instructions; directed them to go to Jerusalem, to wait there until they should receive power from heaven, and then to go forth and preach the gospel to all nations. At last, one day while they were with him, not far from Jerusalem, he bade them farewell, and ascended from the earth; a cloud received him, and they saw him no more.

When the teacher had finished this account, he told the boys that it brought them to the end of the third period of Scripture History, and that although the hour was not quite spent, there would not be time to finish the next period that evening; and therefore he would not begin.

CONVERSATION VI.

FOURTH PERIOD IN SACRED HISTORY.

As the teacher unrolled a map similar to the one adjoining this page, at the next evening in which the boys were to meet, he told them that this map was a representation of those countries in which the events in the remaining portion of scripture history took place. Samuel, said he, can you tell any thing about this map?

Samuel. This large sea running through the middle of the map, is, I should think, the Mediterranean Sea.

John. But it is a great deal larger than the Mediterranean Sea was upon the other maps.

Samuel. That is because on the other maps only a part of the sea is drawn; for those maps only represented the countries about this end of the map, (pointing to the Eastern part of it,) and therefore only this end was drawn.

Teacher. Then this map represents the countries drawn upon the last maps, and a great deal more besides?

Samuel. Yes, Sir. This yellow spot, (pointing to the yellow spot East of the Mediterranean,) is Canaan; and here is the river Jordan and the Dead Sea.

John. How small they are.

Roger. Yes; because on this map they have only a little corner, but on the other they were spread over the whole paper.

Teacher. Yes. This map must be made to take in a much larger region, because after the death of Christ the disciples travelled into many countries, and spread the



SCENE
of the
FOURTH PERIOD
of
SACRED HISTORY.
Early Progress of Christianity

Map.

Roman Empire.

Christian religion far around. I am going this evening to tell you how this was done, and this map shows the countries where the disciples travelled. Can you tell, John, whether they are generally to the Westward or the Eastward of where Christ lived and died ?

John. To the Westward.

Teacher. And the events recorded in the Bible which took place before Christ, were they to the Eastward or Westward of Canaan ?

Roger. To the Eastward. At least, it was East of Canaan where man was created, and where Abraham lived.

Samuel. But the children of Israel remained several hundred years in Egypt, and that is South of Canaan.

Teacher. Yes. But those Eastern countries had gradually declined ; and others farther to the West had become populous and civilized, and had risen to power. You recollect I informed you at the last lesson, that the Romans had possession of Judea, in the time of Christ. All these countries upon this map, and many others farther West and North, were under the Roman power at this time. Roger, can you tell me where Rome is ?

Roger. (Pointing to the West side of the map.) Here it is in Italy.

Teacher. Yes : it was at this time a very great and splendid city, and all these countries were rich and populous, filled with towns and villages, all, however, under the Roman power. But we must begin with our history again.

Samuel. We left off at the ascension of our Saviour.

Teacher. Yes : and do you remember his farewell directions to his followers ?

Samuel. He directed them to go to Jerusalem, and wait there some time, and then to go and preach the gospel to all the world.

The gospel preached to the Jews.

John. How could they preach to all the world? there were only twelve of them, and I should think it would be impossible for them ever to go over the whole world.

Roger. There were only eleven. Judas betrayed Christ.

Teacher. Christ did not consider himself as speaking only to the eleven; but to all his followers, to the end of time. They were but to begin the work. In obedience to his command, the eleven went to Jerusalem; and the first thing which they did was to choose one in the place of Judas. Then they remained waiting for the influences of the Holy Spirit, which Christ had promised. This at last came, and they immediately began to preach the gospel to all the multitudes at Jerusalem.

Roger. What did they preach?

Teacher. Peter seems to have been a chief speaker. He endeavored to convince the Jews, for they spoke only to Jews, that Jesus Christ who had just been crucified at Jerusalem, was the Saviour who had been promised in the Old Testament, and he called upon them to repent of their sins and believe in this Saviour. They spoke too in a great many languages, as the persons there were of many different nations; and as they had had no means of learning these languages themselves, the people who heard, knew that they were taught from God.

Samuel. I thought you said that the people whom they preached to, were all Jews?

Teacher. Yes: they were Jews, but they had been settled in a great many different countries, and had thus learned these different languages, and forgotten their own.

Samuel. This was on the day of Pentecost, was it not?

Teacher. Yes: the account is given in the second

Persecution of the Christians.

chapter of the Acts. Several thousand persons believed, and joined the disciples of Christ.

Roger. Did not they all believe ?

Teacher. No : some ridiculed the apostles and opposed them.

After this, the apostles preached several times in Jerusalem, and performed many miracles. Great numbers believed and were baptized ; thus being admitted to the Christian church. They sold their houses and lands, and put the money into one stock, so as to have all things in common, and thus they lived together very peacefully and happily for some time. Some of them were once or twice forbid by the Jewish government to preach any more, and even punished, but they did not on that account cease. They rejoiced, as the Bible says, to suffer shame for Christ's name.

Samuel. Did they preach any, out of Jerusalem ?

Teacher. No, not yet : though soon after this time a very violent and cruel persecution arose against them, and they then fled into all the surrounding towns and villages, still preaching Christ as the Saviour. This persecution began by the murder of Stephen : you will find an interesting account of his trial and death in one of the early chapters of the Acts.

Roger. Was he one of the apostles ?

Teacher. No : I forgot to mention, that in consequence of the Christians living in common, there was a great deal of business to be attended to, which at first was done by the apostles ; but which they soon found took too much of their time. There were therefore seven officers appointed for this purpose, which were called deacons, and Stephen was one of these.

Roger. Did they go very far away from Jerusalem ?

Teacher. No. The Bible does not give any account

of their going now very far out of Judea. They passed along through the towns and villages of Judea, preaching the gospel, and working miracles ; but they confined themselves entirely to the Jews. Christ had commanded them to publish the gospel first to this people. But he was preparing the way for sending the news of salvation to all nations.

Samuel. How was it necessary to prepare the way ?

Teacher. Two things were to be done. In the first place, to choose and to commission some proper individual for this service ; and in the second place, to prepare the minds of the present Christians for this extension of the offers of salvation.

Samuel. Why, would any of them be unwilling that the gospel should be preached to all ?

Teacher. Perhaps not really unwilling ; but the Jews had been so long accustomed to suppose that the descendants of Abraham were the only nation which God loved, or which he would condescend to save, that they could not be willing to have the gospel preached to any but Jews, without very clear proof that God desired it. But as I was saying before, the first thing was to choose a proper individual, to become as it were the first foreign missionary.

Samuel. Did it require any uncommon qualities to fit a man for this service ?

Teacher. Yes ; for as soon as he should leave Judea and the Jews, he would come into countries where there was more learning and refinement, and a higher state of civilization. He would pass from a province in one of the extremities towards the centre of the great Roman empire, and perhaps would be called to speak as the ambassador of Christ in the very capital itself. To discharge these duties successfully, would require peculiar qualifica-

Preaching to the Gentiles.Saul.

tions. He ought to be a man of intelligence and education, as well as of active enterprize.

Roger. I should think, if God could teach the apostles new languages at once, he might make any man, although he was ignorant, successful even at Rome.

Teacher. So he might have done, undoubtedly ; but God wishes that his servants should at all times exercise ingenuity and diligence in doing his work ; and he has accordingly almost always, in the Bible, given us examples of the kind of characters and of measures best adapted for doing good, so that we may imitate them.

Roger. Who was chosen to go and preach to the Romans ?

Teacher. It was not to the Romans merely, but to all nations, that he was to be sent. The person who was chosen was the bitterest enemy of the Christians.

John. Their enemy ?

Teacher. Yes. His name was Saul, which was afterwards changed to Paul. He was a lawyer, of good education, and of extensive influence, and had been very active and cruel in persecuting the Christians ; and it was on his journey to Damascus, a large city here, (pointing to D., a little to the North East of Judea,) where he was going, to take and imprison some Christians, that Christ appeared to him, and changed him from an enemy to a friend.

Roger. How was it ? I remember something about it, but do not remember it exactly.

Teacher. I cannot stop to describe it to you now : you can read it at any time, in the Acts. Paul immediately began to preach the gospel, and was soon, in consequence of it, involved in great difficulties and dangers.

Roger. Did Christ send him away to the other nations ?

Teacher. He told him that he was going to send him

First preaching to the Gentiles by Peter.

far away to the Gentiles ; but he did not direct him to go immediately. The second thing which I mentioned just now, had not been done. I mean, the Jewish Christians were not yet prepared to have the gospel preached to any but Jews.

Samuel. Ought they not to have been willing, without there being any pains taken to prepare them ?

Teacher. Yes, perhaps they ought. But God is always kind and condescending, even in his manner of removing the prejudices and correcting the faults of those who love him. Had Paul been sent away immediately to the Gentiles, they might, through the influence of long-established prejudices, have thought it the inexperience and rashness of the new convert, and might have been tempted to commit sin by opposing what Christ had directed.

Samuel. Well, what was done to prevent this ?

Teacher. It was so ordered that one of the original apostles, one of well known and established character, and who possessed very fully the confidence of the Christians, should carry the gospel to a Gentile. This was Peter. By God's direction he went to an officer in the Roman army, whose name was Cornelius, to explain to him the character of Christ, and the way to forgiveness of sin, and to everlasting happiness in heaven, through him. Cornelius gladly believed, and joined the Christian church ; and this conversion of a Roman soldier, through the preaching of the apostle Peter, was soon noised abroad, and excited much attention. Peter soon took occasion to explain to the Christians at Jerusalem the reasons for his conduct, and they rejoiced with him, that the way of salvation was now opened to all the nations of the earth.

John. Was Paul now sent away ?

Teacher. Yes : very soon after this, he was at Tarsus, which you see here, (pointing to T, near the North East

Paul's first Mission.Greeks.

corner of the Mediterranean Sea,) where he was born. He had escaped here from the enemies who sought his life soon after his conversion. There was a large church at Antioch, (pointing to Antioch,) near Tarsus. This church was directed to send forth Paul with Barnabas, to accompany him to the work for which they had been called. They accordingly did so, and after a solemn service of fasting and prayer, they sent them away.

John. Which way did they go?

Teacher. They came down from Antioch, (which was back a little way from the sea,) to Seleucia, the nearest seaport, where they embarked in a vessel and sailed away upon the sea.

John. Upon the Mediterranean Sea?

Teacher. Yes. They came out to this island, called Cyprus. This was in the hands of the Romans, and was governed by a Roman officer called a deputy. This deputy sent for them, and after hearing them explain the truths of Christianity, believed. They had some difficulty here with a sorcerer, which you read an account of in the Acts. They soon left Cyprus, and went to the main land again, at Perga, which you see here, (pointing to Perga.) I have marked the track by a dotted line upon the map.

John. Did they not sail any more?

Teacher. No, not at present. They travelled about in these provinces, painted different colors. Pamphylia, Pisidia, &c. preaching the gospel in all the large towns.

Roger. Was this country inhabited by the Romans?

Teacher. No: it was under the Roman government, but the people were generally Greeks. This had been a part of the great Grecian empire until the Romans had conquered it. Paul and Barnabas, however, generally preached first in the Jewish synagogues.

 Synagogues.

Heathen gods.

Paul's preaching.

John. What were the synagogues?

Teacher. They were buildings for public worship, which the Jews built in all the towns where many of them were settled. They used to assemble in these to hear the Bible read, that is, the Old Testament, and to pray; sometimes to these was added preaching.

Roger. Did the other persons who lived in these towns, the Greeks and the Romans, come to meeting in the Jews' synagogues?

Teacher. No, not often. They did not believe in Jehovah, the only God, but they thought there were a great many gods and goddesses—such as one god of the earth, and another of the air, another of water. So also they had a god of war, and of peace, and of wisdom, and a great many others besides. In many places they had temples built for some of these, and they offered sacrifices to them.

Samuel. Why did Paul preach in the Jewish synagogues? I thought he was sent to preach to the Gentiles.

Teacher. So he was: but whenever he came into any place, he always first endeavored to convince the Jews that Christ was the Saviour who had been promised in the Old Testament. He usually, in order to do this, went into their synagogues and read the descriptions of the Saviour in their own Bibles, and then showed how they all applied to Jesus, who he told them had been lately crucified, and had risen again from the dead, at Jerusalem. After he had thus tried to convince the Jews that their Saviour had come, he then turned to the Gentiles, and endeavored to persuade them to give up their imaginary gods, and to worship Jehovah, and believe on his Son.

Roger. How long did they stay in this part of the country?

Paul's return.A difficulty arises.

Teacher. Not a great while. They suffered a great many hardships and dangers, and once or twice Paul was almost killed by his enemies, as you may see by reading the account in the Acts. However, a great many believed, and several churches were established; and at last, Paul and Barnabas came down to the sea-coast at Perga, and sailed for home. They landed at Seleucia, and then went up to Antioch. As soon as they arrived, the Christians, who had sent them, came together, and Paul and Barnabas related to them all that they had done, and all that had happened to them.

Roger. Why did they not go farther before they returned home?

Teacher. I do not know: they undoubtedly had good reasons. But they did not remain long at home: they soon set out upon another excursion. Though before this, a difficult question arose, which was to be settled first.

Roger. About which way they should go?

Teacher. No: it was upon a much more important subject. You recollect I told you that the Jewish Christians were at first rather reluctant to have the gospel preached to any but Jews; but since God's will in regard to this had been plainly made known, they generally acquiesced; but now some of them said that if the gospel was preached to any of the Gentiles, they could not embrace it and become Christians, unless they became Jews too.

John. How? What did they mean by becoming Jews?

Teacher. They meant, complying with all the rites and ceremonies which were required by the Jewish law, which was given to the Israelites, while they were travelling from Egypt to Canaan. Some, I say, thought that all the converts ought to keep this law, as well as obey Christ's commands; while others thought that the Gentiles, who

Difficulty settled.

A contention.

believed in Christ, were only to obey the commands, and keep the precepts of the new dispensation. They thought that the Jewish law was designed only for the descendants of Abraham until the Messiah should come, and then that the Christian precepts and ordinances should take the place of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law.

Samuel. How was the question decided ?

Teacher. They sent Paul and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem, to call together there a council of the church to consider this question ; and this council, after carefully considering the subject, saw that the future converts to Christianity ought not to be burdened with the Jewish ceremonies ; and the council accordingly wrote a letter to the church at Antioch, and made known to them this decision.

John. Did Paul and Barnabas carry back the letter ?

Teacher. Yes ; and soon after they arrived at Antioch, they set out on another mission. They however could not agree who should go with them ; and so, after some contention, they separated, and went different ways.

Roger. Contention ? I thought they were inspired.

Teacher. Yes, Paul was inspired to write nothing but what was true ; but that does not prove that he never acted wrong : though perhaps it is not certain that he was wrong in this case. But we cannot stop to inquire about that now. Paul set out, in company with one or two others, on his second mission.

Roger. Did he go by water again ?

Teacher. No : this time he went by land. He passed around the North Eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, towards Pamphylia, where he had been before.—*John,* can you tell through what provinces he must pass ?

John. (Looking upon the map.) Through a part of Syria and Cilicia.

Paul's second Mission.Greece.

Teacher. Yes : he passed through, in this way, almost all this country lying between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, which you see is divided into many small provinces. At last, he came to the North West part of it, to this province, (pointing to Mysia.)

Roger. Did he stop here?

Teacher. He could not go any farther by land ; for you see the country is surrounded by water on the West, and North, and South. There were very rich and populous countries beyond, and many large and splendid cities, in Macedonia and Achaia ; for this was, not long before, the centre of the Grecian empire. Paul, however, seems to have hesitated a little, whether it were best for him to go over.

Samuel. Did he meet with much success in these provinces of Asia ?

Teacher. Yes, and with very great success, but also with great opposition. Great multitudes flocked to hear him ; but many were exceedingly enraged against him, and several times his life was in the greatest danger.— There is an account given in Acts, of what happened to him in the several towns as he passed along.

Samuel. Where did he at last decide to go, from Mysia ?

Teacher. God directed him to go on to Macedonia, and he accordingly did ; and after travelling and preaching some time in this region, he came down here to Athens and Corinth, two of the most celebrated cities in the world. He preached and established churches in almost all the towns and cities which he visited ; and he suffered many hardships, and met with many interesting adventures, which we must not stop now to consider. At last, he set out on his return, and arrived safely at Antioch.

Roger. Why did he go to Antioch every time ?

Teacher. There seems to have been a large and flourishing church at Antioch, and you remember it was this

Paul's letters.His return.

church which ordained Paul for this work. Perhaps the Christians could be in greater safety at Antioch than at Jerusalem. However, Paul did not long remain at home. He set out again, travelled through Asia, and came to Ephesus, a very large city here, (pointing to Ephesus, in the western part of Asia.) He remained in this city for some time, and then he went over to Macedonia, and travelled down through Greece, visiting the churches which had been planted before in this country. Besides visiting the churches, he wrote letters to a great many, while he was upon these journeys. John, did you ever hear of these letters?

John. No, Sir ; I do not remember that I have.

Teacher. What is there in the New Testament after the Acts ?

John. There are a great many other short books—Romans and Corinthians, and some more : I do not remember all the names.

Teacher. Why do these books have such names as Romans ? What does Romans mean ?

John. I suppose it means the people who live in Rome. I do not know why the book is called so.

Roger. It is called the epistle to the Romans.

Teacher. And what does epistle mean ?

Roger. I believe it means a letter.

Teacher. Yes, these books are almost all of them letters written by Paul to the various churches which he had established, giving them advice and instruction. A great many of them were written while he was upon these journeys. But I must hasten. Paul returned, after a time, to Judea again, where he met with new and great difficulties. The Jews determined to kill him ; and soon after he arrived at Jerusalem, one day, while he was in

the temple there, they collected in a great mob, took him, brought him out of the temple, and began to beat him, and were going to kill him.

Roger. How did he escape ?

Teacher. A Roman officer came down, with some soldiers, and rescued him, and carried him off into a castle, where he was safe. The next day, the officer told the Jews, that if they wished to try Paul regularly, according to law, he would bring him down before their council. Do either of you remember the name of the great council of the Jews ?

Samuel. The Sanhedrim.

Teacher. Yes : this council assembled accordingly, and Paul was sent before it by the Roman officer. Here he made a very able defence, and in consequence of it the council could not agree in regard to him. There was so great a contention among them, that the Roman officer feared they would pull Paul to pieces ; and he sent down some soldiers, who took him away from them by force, and brought him back to the castle.

Roger. What did he do with him then ?

Teacher. His enemies formed a plot to take away his life, which was very cunningly devised, and it failed by being found out in a remarkable manner. You can read the account in the 23d chapter of Acts. The Roman officer then sent Paul down to Cæsarea, protecting him by a strong guard.

Samuel. Where was Cæsarea ?

Teacher. It was West of Jerusalem, on the sea-coast, where the Roman governor resided. The Roman officer who had protected Paul at Jerusalem, sent him down to this governor, so that he might be tried there, under his authority.

Paul's appeal.Cæsar.

John. What did the governor do with him ?

Teacher. He sent up to Jerusalem to have his accusers come down, and then he was tried ; but nothing was proved against him. However, the governor kept him a prisoner, though not closely confined, for about two years, and then another man was appointed governor.

Very soon after the new governor had entered upon his office, the Jews applied to him, with a request that Paul might be tried and condemned. The new governor then called Paul before him, with his accusers also, and, after a slight examination, proposed to him that he should go up to Jerusalem, and there be tried by the Jews. Paul said no : he was not accountable, he said, to the Jews : he was on trial before the Romans, and he appealed to Cæsar.

John. What did he mean by that ?

Teacher. Cæsar was the Roman emperor, the great monarch at Rome, who reigned over all these countries, appointed all these governors, and commanded all the armies. Paul said, he would go and be tried before him.

Roger. Suppose the governor would not send him.

Teacher. I believe he was obliged to, by the laws, in cases of this kind. At any rate, he did determine to send him ; and not long after, Paul embarked in a large vessel, and set out on his voyage to Rome. Can you tell, John, in what direction he was going ?

John. West.

Teacher. And over what sea ?

John. The Mediterranean.

Teacher. Yes, it was the Mediterranean Sea, and a very interesting account of the voyage is given in the Acts. Do you remember, Samuel, whether they reached Rome without any difficulty ?

Close of Scripture History.

Samuel. No, Sir, they did not : they were shipwrecked and cast upon the island of Melita.

Teacher. Yes, and afterwards went to Rome in another ship. Here Paul remained two years, as a prisoner ; and here the history of the Bible closes.

John. What became of Paul afterwards ?

Teacher. The Bible does not tell, and it is rather uncertain.

Samuel. Is this the end of the Bible ? There are several books after the Acts.

Teacher. Yes ; but they are not historical books : they are letters, which do not relate the history of any individuals mentioned in the Bible.

John. And is this all which you are going to teach us this winter ?

Teacher. No : there are several other things about the Bible, which I wish to explain to you. But before leaving the subject of History, I wish to say something to you upon the subject of Scripture Chronology. Do you know, Roger, what is meant by Chronology ?

Roger. No, Sir.

Samuel. Is it not the time when events happened ?

Teacher. Yes : it is the science of determining the times of events. All, however, which I wish to have you attend to now, is a way of representing the times of events. Do you know, Samuel, how long it is from the creation of the world to the present time ?

Samuel. About eighteen hundred years.

Roger. I thought it was eighteen hundred years since the time of Christ ; and the world was created long before that.

Teacher. How long ?

Roger. I do not know.

The Chronological line.

Samuel. I remember now : it was four thousand years from the creation to the time of Christ, and eighteen hundred years from that time to this.

Teacher. And how much does that make in all ?

Roger. Five thousand eight hundred years.

Teacher. Yes : now we may represent this period by a line.

While the teacher said this, he drew upon a piece of paper a long line, with a pen and a rule, which were upon the table.

Teacher. Now, as the time from the creation to the present time is nearly six thousand years, we will suppose this line represents six thousand years. If I divide it now into six equal parts, how much will each represent ?

John. One thousand years.

Teacher. Yes. Now, we may divide each thousand years into ten parts ; and the line will then be divided into hundreds. But I will make the marks at the end of each thousand years larger than the others, and write the figures over each division.

While the teacher said this, he drew a line, and divided it as follows :—



Teacher. Now, this line represents the whole number of years from the creation to the present time, and even a little beyond this time, as it is not yet quite six thousand years since the creation. Now, suppose I wish to mark the birth of Christ upon this line, where should it be marked.

John. Here, (pointing to the division marked 4000.)

Times of events;—their places upon the line.

Teacher. Why?

John. Because Christ was born 4000 years after the creation.

Samuel. Was it not 4004 years?

Teacher. Yes: and will this make any difference in the place of marking it?

Samuel. I should think it should be beyond the division for four thousand years, because there are four years besides.

Teacher. And how much farther?

Samuel. (Hesitating.) I do not know.

Teacher. Should you think it ought to be as much farther as to the first small division?

Roger. No, Sir: because that is for a hundred years, and it should be only four years.

Teacher. Right. We cannot tell precisely where it should be marked, but it will be near enough if we make it a very little farther.

Samuel. Could we not have the line divided into smaller parts than a hundred years?

Teacher. Yes, by making it longer; then each of the parts would be longer and might be subdivided. There would be another advantage of having the line longer: can you think what it would be?

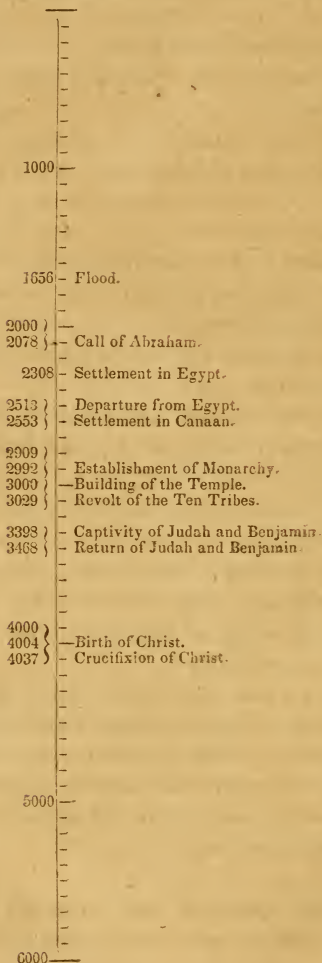
Samuel. Yes: we could write more names, and thus represent more events, without having it crowded.

Teacher. Yes: but I think it will not be necessary now. This line will answer our present purpose very well. You can perhaps make more full and perfect ones yourselves, at some future time.

The teacher then began to mark upon the line the principal events which he had mentioned in relating the

The Chronological line.

course of Scripture History. The line appeared when finished as follows :



Advantages of the line.

Another method.

Sainuel. What is the use of making a chronological line like this? It does not learn us any thing, for we are obliged to know the time of each event before we can write it down.

Teacher. True : we do not learn the times of events by it. But it helps us to gain more correct ideas of the distances between events, and it helps us also to remember them. Can you tell me without looking upon the line, which was the longest time, from the creation to the flood, or from the flood to the settlement of the Jews in Canaan?

Samuel. I should think it was much longer from the flood to the settlement in Canaan.

Roger. Yes, Sir : for the flood you know was the first thing almost after the creation.

Teacher. Now look at the line, and see.

Samuel. (After looking.) I see I was wrong, there is a much longer part of the line between the creation and the flood.

Teacher. Yes : and the reason why you supposed it was a short time is because the Bible gives only a short account of it. Now drawing such a line as this serves to correct all such mistaken notions.

But there are several other ways of obtaining clear ideas in regard to the times of events. There are, you know, six days in the week, not reckoning the Sabbath. Now we can let these six days represent the six thousand years, and assist ourselves to remember the times of events by considering in what part of the week they would come. On this plan, Roger, what day would represent the first thousand years?

Roger. Monday ; and Tuesday the second, and Wednesday the third thousand years.

Days of the week employed.

Teacher. And can you tell me what events would happen on Monday ?

Roger. I can tell by looking upon the chronological line, and seeing what events happened in the first thousand years.

Teacher. Well, look.

Roger. (After looking.) There are none.

Teacher. No : we did not mark any, but perhaps you recollect some mentioned in the Bible.

John. Cain killed Abel then.

Roger. And the fall of man took place.

Teacher. Right. Now, can any of you tell in what part of the chronological week the flood took place ?

Samuel. On Tuesday.

Teacher. Why ?

Samuel. Because it was in the second thousand years.

Teacher. What part of Tuesday would it be, forenoon or afternoon ? Can you tell, John ?

John. No, Sir : I do not know how to tell.

Teacher. In what year was the flood ?

John. (Looking upon the chronological line.) In 1656.

Teacher. Yes. Now, what is the middle of the second thousand years ?

John. 1500 years.

Teacher. Well, is 1656 before or after the middle ?

John. It is after ; and therefore it would be after the middle of Tuesday, or in the afternoon.

Teacher. In the same way we may fix the times of all the principal events in the chronological week, and remember them easier.

Samuel. The birth of Christ would be on Friday morning—would it not ?

Teacher. Yes. And when would be the discovery of America ?

Times of events.The boys go home.

Samuel. I do not know in what year it was.

Teacher. In 1492.

Samuel. That means 1492 years after Christ : does it not ?

Teacher. Yes ; and we must add the 4004 years before Christ, to find out how long it was since the creation.

Roger. It would be 5496. So that the discovery of America would be in the fifth thousand years.

Teacher. No, not in the fifth, because five thousand years had passed, and more than four hundred years of the sixth.

Roger. Then it would be on Saturday, which represented the sixth thousand years.

Teacher. What part of Saturday ?

Samuel. Almost Saturday noon.

Teacher. And what would represent the present time ?

Roger. Saturday night.

Teacher. Not Saturday night exactly.

Roger. No : because the six thousand years are not yet out. But it would be late in the afternoon.

The teacher talked with the boys some time longer ; and among other things he said, that it would be a good plan for each of them to make a chronological line, and mark upon it all the remarkable events which had happened since the world was created, if they could find the years in which they happened. He told them they might mark down the events which are mentioned in other books besides the Bible, if they chose. After he had finished talking to them upon this subject, the boys went home ; and on the way Roger said he meant to make a chronological line, and that he would carry it to school, and show it to Samuel.

It happened, however, that Samuel, and Roger, and

Attempts to make a Chronological line.

John, and all the other boys in that school, were very busy all that week, in the play hours of the school, in building a large snow fort, and they did not think much of the chronological line. Samuel did not know whether Roger had tried to make one or not, until the next week, when the boys were going together, on Wednesday evening, to the teacher's; and then he asked him about it.

Roger said that he tried to make one, but that he did not do it very well. He drew his line, and divided it into parts, but he found sometimes a good many events came so near together that he had not room to write them; and so in some parts of his line the words were crowded and blotted, and in other parts there was nothing at all. He did not see, he said, why the events did not happen equally in all the parts.

Samuel. Perhaps you did not know them all.

John. Why did not you make the line longer? then there would be more room.

Roger. I did make it as long as the paper was.

Samuel. Where is the paper? I want to see it.

Roger. I threw it away. I mean to make a better one. I have thought of a way to make one very, very long, so as to be sure to have room enough to write all the events. I mean to have it as long as I am, from head to foot.

John. I don't believe you can get a piece of paper long enough for that.

Roger. I am going to paste a good many pieces together in a row, and then draw the line over them all; and then when it is finished I shall roll it up.

Samuel. There is another way in which we might do it. We might make a little book, with six pages, and draw a line from the top to the bottom of each page—and let each of these lines be a thousand years. We might have the lines on one side of the page, and the events

Various plans.

might be written in the middle of the page, opposite the proper parts of the line.

Roger. I do not think this would be so well, because we should not see the whole six thousand years together.

Samuel. No, we should not see it all together ; but a book would be so much more handy to carry than a roll, and then it would not wear out so quick. But I think you had better make a roll, and I will make a book, and then we will compare them.

Very soon after this, the boys arrived at the teacher's house.

The boys assemble.Teacher sick.

CONVERSATION VII.

THE boys knocked at the teacher's door, and while they were waiting for some one to open it, John observed that there was no light in the parlor where they had been accustomed to meet with the teacher; but that there was a light in the chamber above. Samuel said he was afraid somebody was sick. Presently the door opened softly, and a woman appeared, and, after looking at them an instant, said, Do you want any thing, boys?

Samuel. We came to see our teacher: we always come on Wednesday evenings.

Woman. Your teacher is sick, and you cannot see him to-night.

Samuel. What is the matter with him?

Woman. I do not know: he has been sick two or three days. The doctor says, perhaps he will not live; so you had better go home.

Roger whispered to Samuel to ask the woman if they could not do any thing for him—but just then some one at the top of the stairs spoke in a low voice to the woman, and asked her if those were the Sabbath school boys who were at the door. The woman turned to the boys, and asked, Are you the Sabbath school boys?

Yes, ma'am, said John.

Then, said the voice at the top of the stairs, the teacher says he should like to have them walk up: he wants to see them a few moments.

Samuel and Roger immediately walked in—but John

Appearance of a sick room.

remained upon the steps, apparently unwilling to follow them. Come, John, said Roger, as he stood holding the door, ready to shut it.

John said he did not want to go.

What—don't you want to go and see the teacher? said Roger.

I don't want to see him, if he is sick, and going to die.

He is not going to die *now*, and he wants to see us:—come, you must go.

With some persuasion he was led in, and they all walked softly up stairs. John had never seen a person dangerously sick, and he expected to find the teacher suffering a great deal of pain, and looking very unhappy. But when the door opened, and he followed Samuel and Roger in, he was surprised to find every thing looking so cheerful and pleasant. There was a bright glowing fire upon the hearth, and it shed its light strongly over all the objects in the room. The teacher lay, or rather reclined, in his bed, his back being raised by pillows. He was pale: but he smiled when the boys came in; and they thought they never saw him look so happy. Near the bed there was a table, covered with phials and medicines; and the doctor was sitting by it, doing up some little papers. The teacher's sister was sitting by the side of the fire, with a Bible in her hand.

I am glad to see you, boys, (said he, in a faint but cheerful voice, as they entered.) Sit down a few minutes: I want to talk with you a little, when the doctor has finished giving his directions.

The boys sat down, and listened to the doctor, while he gave the directions to the nurse about taking care of the sick man through the night. At last, he turned to the teacher himself, and said, taking hold of his hand,—

Well, Sir, I must bid you good evening. I hope you

The pious physician.Sickness sudden.

will have a comfortable night. You may, however, suffer a good deal, and you are aware that you are constantly in some danger. I should not speak so freely of this, if I did not see that it does not agitate you.

Teacher. I think, Sir, you will find that the best way to keep me quiet and composed, is to tell me openly and plainly what is my condition. I am not reluctant to die, if it is God's will : but if my dying hour is approaching, I wish to know it.

Doctor. It may be near—but I hope not. But whether you live or die, I trust God will give you resignation to his will. But I must leave you—for you must not talk much. These boys, (continued he, looking at Samuel and his companions,) must not stay long, or they will tire you. I am glad, however, that they have come ; for you will do them some good. It will certainly do them good to see how a Christian feels and acts upon a sick and perhaps a dying bed.

So saying, the pious physician bade all in the room good night, and went away.

Come, boys, said the teacher, come and stand by my bed-side, for I cannot speak very loud.

They came and stood by the side of the bed, and looked, with very sorrowful countenances, upon the teacher's pale cheeks and wasted form.

How long have you been sick ? said Samuel.

Teacher. Not long. Last Sabbath I was at meeting, and as well as usual ; and now you see how I am. It does not take long for God to take away our strength, and bring us to sickness and pain.

John. I am very sorry you are sick, Sir.

Teacher. I thank you for feeling for me, John : but I do not know that we ought to be sorry. Sickness does a great deal of good.

Sickness teaches patience ;—humility.

Roger. Good? What good does it do, Sir?

Teacher. Perhaps I ought to have said, it *may* do a great deal of good. Why, in the first place, it may increase our *patience*.

Roger. I should think, Sir, that to bear sickness and pain, would make men *impatient*.

Teacher. No : it ought not to. Consider, for example, my case. God has laid me here, and sometimes I suffer a good deal of pain : but I know it comes from Him ; and I know it is for some good design, and I try to bear it *patiently*.—If I am for a moment, when the pain is severe, fretful or uneasy,—when I think of it afterwards again, it grieves me to think of my repining at an evil so trifling, compared with what Christ willingly suffered for me ; and so when the pain returns again, I try to bear it better.—I remember, too, that God is near me all the time, and that he is noticing all my feelings, and that he hears all my words ; and this makes me careful to try to please him.

Samuel. Sometimes people are sick without suffering much pain.

Teacher. Yes ; and they may learn patience another way. Perhaps they are confined to their rooms a long, very long time, or perhaps their business is interrupted when there was something they were particularly desirous of doing ; and these things try their patience.

John. But sometimes people are sick, who are already very patient. I don't think you need to have to bear pain, to prevent your being fretful.

Teacher. O yes, John, every body needs it. No one is as patient and resigned to God's will as he ought to be. But there are a great many other advantages of sickness. It makes men feel *humble*.

Samuel. How?

Teacher. When we are strong, and healthy, and pros-

Dependence upon God.

perous, we are very likely to forget that God's power alone holds us up from day to day. Here is Roger now, young and vigorous, he hardly knows what sickness is, but he is just as weak in himself, and just as dependent upon God, as I am, who lie here scarcely able to turn myself over in my bed.—But I think it very probable that he has not felt how dependent he is upon God, while he has been at his work and his play to-day, as I have who have been lying here weak and low.

Roger. I do not think I have.

Teacher. Now suppose God should see that Roger, or either of you should be going on from day to day, forgetting your dependence upon him; feeling and acting as if you were able to take care of yourselves, and thus wandering in heart from God, perhaps he would send sickness to you, to remind you that you cannot protect yourselves;—that you are his children, sustained by his goodness, and guarded by his love;—and if he should do so, it would be a great mercy, and would do you a great deal of good.

Samuel. But cannot we remember our weakness and our dependence upon God, without being sick?

Teacher. Yes: undoubtedly we might, but we do not; and if sickness is improved aright, it reminds us of these things. But sickness will not of itself make us humble and patient without our own efforts, and God's blessing.

John. Does sickness do any other good besides this?

Teacher. Yes: it makes those who love God more faithful in obeying his commands when they recover. While lying here, I think how uncertain this world is, and how unwise it is for me to place my hopes upon it. I think how soon I must die, even if I recover from this disorder; and I think too how many there are in this world who are soon to go to another, for which they are

Sickness of the wicked.

The Bible.

not prepared, and this leads me to wish when I am well to be more careful in obeying God's commands, and in persuading others to obey them. I form resolutions to do this, and pray God to help me keep them.

John. Do all people do this, when they are sick ?

Teacher. No, John—I am afraid not. There are a great many, who do not think of God while they are well, and then they are afraid to come to him when they are sick : or if they do try to pray, it is only because they fear they are going to die ; and when they recover, they forget the resolutions they made when they were sick. It is very common for wicked men to be very much alarmed when sickness comes, and to resolve to love and serve God, perhaps thinking that they are sincere ; but when they recover, they generally become as wicked as before.

John. Do you think you shall get well ?

Teacher. I do not know, John. That will be just as God pleases. I wish to have him do just as seems best to him. Sometimes when I think of it, and imagine myself well, and seated once more with you around the table in our evening lecture, it seems as if it would be pleasant to enjoy health and strength again.

Samuel. I wish it could be so. But was there much more that you were going to tell us about the Bible ? You had gone nearly through it, and we were afraid you were going to stop.

Teacher. The Bible, Samuel, is an inexhaustible mine. There is no end to the interesting information which may be found in it or concerning it. I once knew a man who informed me that he had read the Bible through twelve times when he was twelve years of age, and once every year up to the time when I saw him, when he was more than seventy years old,—and he said that every time he

The minister comes in.

found many things new and interesting, which he had not observed before.*

John. Was he a good man ?

Teacher. Yes : he tried to obey the Bible, as well as to read it. But, as I was going to say, I wished to have had some more conversations with you on the Bible ; but God has thought best to interrupt us, and we must all feel perfectly willing to give up whatever he chooses to take away. Perhaps I may soon be restored to health, and then we may resume our meetings : or, perhaps God designs to bring me soon down to the dust. If so, I hope and believe that the Bible has been the means of preparing me to die. You must all read and study it for this purpose. It will do no important good to you, merely to understand its history, or take pleasure in its interesting narratives, if you do not learn from it how your sins are to be forgiven, and how you are to be prepared for heaven.

While the teacher was speaking these last words, a gentle tap was heard at the door of the room ; and the teacher's sister, who was sitting by the side of the fire, walked softly across the room, and opened the door. It was the minister.

Well, my good little girl, (said he, coming in,) I always find you here. I believe you are a very patient, faithful nurse. How is your brother to-night ? (continued he, approaching the side of the bed, and taking the teacher by the hand.) Are you comfortable, and happy ?

Teacher. Yes, both : and I believe I am a little better to-night than I have been for a few days past. Though the result is still uncertain.

Yes, replied the minister, sickness would seldom do us much good if we were sure we should soon be well again. Then, turning round to the boys who had by this time

* A fact.

John's reflections.The boys go home.

drawn back from the bed-side, and were standing near the fire,—How do you do, John, and Roger? I hardly expected to find you in a sick room.

Teacher. They are a part of my class in the Sabbath school. I have been telling them about the advantages of sickness. But, boys, I wish you would sit down by the fire. I wish to talk a little with the minister, and then perhaps I will see you again a moment before you go.

The boys accordingly sat down: the minister and the teacher engaged in conversation, and the teacher's sister was busy at the fire preparing something which the boys supposed was for her brother. Samuel began to talk with her about him. Sometimes the other boys listened, and sometimes they sat still in deep thought. John remembered how differently from the teacher he felt and acted, when he was sick a few months before. He remembered that he was peevish and fretful, impatient when in pain, and unwilling to take the medicines necessary for him. When he thought of what the teacher had said, and saw that that sickness had been sent by God, to do him good, by teaching him patience and submission, he was grieved to think that he had learned it no better—and a tear stood in his eye.

They sat in this manner some time, until at last the minister arose and said,—Well, boys, I believe we must all go. I am very glad your teacher has had opportunity to see and converse with you, now he is sick; but I believe he must not say any more to-night. He has talked too much, and has made himself tired and feverish, and now he needs rest.

The boys were sorry to go: but they walked up to his bed-side, and one after another bade him good-night, and then, with the minister, went away.

Visit occasions serious impressions and earnest prayer.

The deep impressions produced by this visit to the sick bed of their dying teacher, did not soon leave them. As they returned home, they dwelt on the subjects which had been brought before their minds ; and as they spoke to each other with strong interest of the teacher's sickness and of his wished-for recovery, each one firmly resolved to remember his instructions, and endeavor to follow his example of piety.

As they knelt that night by their bed-sides in prayer, they did not forget to implore God's blessing upon their suffering friend ; but they prayed more earnestly than ever before, that God would change their own hearts, and bring them entirely under the sway of the principles and precepts of the BIBLE.

THE END.





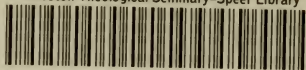






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